R. L. S.

R. L. Stevenson. aet. 35.

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BY

FRANCIS WATT

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J. M. BARRIE

... WITH A FRONTISPIECE IN PHOTOGRAVURE

TORONTO
BELL & COCKBURN

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CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	R. L. S. AND HIS PEOPLE	1
II.	A WALK THROUGH STEVENSON'S EDINBURGH	25
III.	EDINBURGH IN FACT AND FANCY	42
IV.	EDINBURGH IN THE WORKS	51
V.	THE PENTLANDS IN STEVENSON'S LIFE	78
VI.	THE PENTLANDS IN STEVENSON'S WRITINGS	91
VII.	ABOUT THE LOTHIANS WITH R. L. S.	103
VIII.	HIGHLAND SCENE AND HIGHLAND STORY	114
IX.	THE TRIAL AT INVERARAY	123
X.	SOME REAL PEOPLE IN *KIDNAPPED* AND *CATRIONA*	136
XI.	ENGLISH SCENES AND INCIDENTS, LONDON	158
XII.	ENGLISH SCENES AND INCIDENTS, THE PROVINCES	167
XIII.	SOME FRENCH PASSAGES	177
XIV.	R. L. S. ON THE CONTINENT	191
XV.	AMERICAN SCENES	203
XVI.	THE SOUTH SEAS	215
XVII.	R. L. S. AS LETTER-WRITER	226
XVIII.	AS PLAYRIGHT	236
XIX.	AS RHYMER IN SCOTS AND ENGLISH	250
XX.	AS ENGINEER AND LAWYER	256
XXI.	WOMEN OF R. L. S.	264
XXII.	THE RELIGION OF R. L. S.	272
XIII.	THE CHARACTER OF R. L. S.	282
XIV.	THE QUESTION OF STYLE	291
	INDEX	307

ntispiece.—PORTRAIT OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, *ÆT.* 35

From a photograph by the late A. G. Dew Smith, by kind permission of Mr. Lloyd Osburne

R. L. S.

CHAPTER I

R. L. S. AND HIS PEOPLE

IN an unfinished fragment of family history R. L. S. with even more than his usual ingenuity has speculated on his name and race. Now he will have them ardent Covenanters, or again parts of that broken clan the Macgregors, fain to adopt this or any other alias. He dwells with peculiar fondness on the legend of a French barber-surgeon who came to St. Andrews in the service of Cardinal Beaton, and there founded the family. But all are vain imaginings. Stevenson, if not the most common, is yet a quite common Scots name, sometimes of places and very often of people. Take any Lowland town you please, call the roll of its folk and many a Stevenson would answer *adsum!* But "a' Stewarts are no' sib to the King," and none of them would claim relationship with our author.

The name itself seems of Norse origin, but possibly it was Gaelic or Pictish, or indeed anything; for your antiquary comes, and in the crucible of his lore or his fancy things take strange shapes. It may be so

with Stevenson. In etymology, especially Gaelic etymology, all things are possible. However, what is certain about the family is that they grew of a stock of westland Whigs who dwelt in a corner of Renfrewshire in the latter part of the eighteenth century. For practical purposes their history begins with our author's grandfather, Robert Stevenson (1772–1850). In 1796 his stepfather Smith, the first engineer to the Commissioners of Northern Lights, took him into partnership. He married Jean, Smith's eldest daughter, for half a century was himself engineer to the Commissioners. He spent his life in a house built by his father and stepfather, 1 and 2 Baxter Place.

There are strange points of resemblance and contrast between him and his distinguished grandson. The seas and rocks of Scotland were less figured on charts, less lighted and secure you might think, than those South Seas on which the grandson sailed a century later. The romance of the strange and the unknown had its attraction for both generations. The elder Stevenson was no student in his earlier years, but later a continual worker. He was liked and respected, though his hold was that of awe rather than of charm. The most obvious difference was the one was a man of action, the other a man of thought. The one controlled materials and forces, the other ideas.

The great exploit of Robert Stevenson was the building of the Bell Rock tower on what is known in poetry as the Inchcape Rock, with its legend of the bell, and to old-time mariners in fact as a

deadly peril. It lies off the mouths of the Tay and Forth, and is about 1400 feet in length, of which 427 are discovered at low water. From 1794 it attracted Stevenson. In December 1799, during a great gale, many ships were cast away on it, chief of them H.M.S. *York*, which went down with all hands. This quickened public interest and anxiety, but there were long and tedious legislative and other preliminaries to be gone through, and it was not till July 1807 that Robert with a floating lightship and a sloop of 40 tons burden, accompanied by a chosen band of seamen and artificers, attacked the work.

It took four years, for from October to February nothing could be done, and at other times the difficulty was great. It was before the era of steam, and the mechanical appliance of the day seems to us puerile. Forges were built on the Rock, then whenever the tide had sunk, sailors and workers rowed from the ships to the uncovered ground, lighted fires, mined, drilled, scraped with feverish energy for a space of two hours or so, until the tide rose. The workmen toiled up to their knees in water, but presently the furnace hissed in vain against the waves, and all was black. Labour withdrew, carrying many of its implements to the boats, among them the huge bellows which sustained the fire. Not seldom the work was hindered by terrific storms, the lightship tossed so terribly that every minute it threatened to turn turtle, or dash from its moorings on the rock. For twenty-four hours at a time Stevenson never

closed an eye or swallowed a morsel of food, yet the ship was no sooner free from danger of wreck, the waves were no sooner reduced to manageable height, than the heroic band, still suffering mentally and bodily, forced themselves to renewed effort. Again the fire glowed and the chisel rang, the smoke rose to the sky, and at length from the ground there began also to rise the structure of the tower.

In his journal Robert Stevenson recorded the story in minute detail. His grandson was too eminent an artist to spoil the natural force by paraphrase or elaboration, he but pruned and cleared away. It is the most interesting part of the *Records of a Family of Engineers*, the finest of Stevenson's efforts in biography. The story is full of quaint detail, for here are the men and the manners of another age. The master wished his helpers to labour on Sunday, so he lectured them as to works of necessity and mercy, which the Shorter Catechism allows to break the repose of the Scots Sabbath. His men discussed the point with the unction of an assembly of divines. Yet all were persuaded, save four, whereof three finally gave in. Stevenson records with satisfaction that on that day all toiled with peculiar energy and solemnity.

Once there was a mutiny: the men thought they had not enough beer, and yet the allowance per man was three quarts *per diem*, with extra draughts on special occasions; also glasses of spirit were doled out when the weather was stormy, or they

were early at work or late at work, or when it was the King's birthday, or when anything in fact the least out of the usual happened. One man was sent ashore, whereupon the others submitted. A degenerate race can only wonder at and admire the indomitable courage and persistence of all concerned, the nice scrupulosity of their theological convictions, the seasoned stomachs and seasoned heads, untouched by even the mightiest draughts.

It goes without saying that in every effort and every danger Robert Stevenson was first. No band of men could have accomplished such things without a leader of exceptional force. It is not fanciful to compare those efforts in the face of every physical discouragement with the toil of the grandson who cut and chiselled page after page of word symmetry and beauty through long years of almost mortal sickness; at work again whenever the cruel foe relaxed his grip for a moment.

Robert had a large family, whereof three sons rose to distinction. The eldest was Alan (1807–1865). He was partner with his father, and in 1843 he succeeded him as engineer to the Commissioners. He built ten lighthouses; the most famous of them was Skerryvore. *His* only son was R. A. M. Stevenson (1847–1900), known in the family circle and beyond it as "Bob," the nearest and most intimate of the friends of R. L. S. David Stevenson, the third son (1815–1886), wrote his father's life. Thomas Stevenson (1818–1887), the father of R. L. S., was the youngest son. A cultured and educated man, he followed the old paths with

glad acquiescence and intelligent conviction. He had a good knowledge of Latin and was deeply if not widely read. In 1846 he became partner in his father's firm. In 1853 he and his brother David were appointed engineers to the Commissioners of Northern Lights, which office he held till 1885. He improved lighthouse illumination, a fact gracefully referred to by the son in one of his charming dedications. I do not know whether the master or men who built the Bell Rock would have considered him as one of themselves. To us he seems rather of the older than the modern world, and is, after all, mainly interesting as the father of R. L. S.

Robert Lewis Balfour Stevenson was born at 8 Howard Place, Edinburgh, on 13th November 1850. He finally wrote his name Robert Louis Stevenson. The initials R. L. S. became, in Sir J. M. Barrie's words, the best beloved in recent literature. Louis, he and his intimates always pronounced with the final letter sounded. There was a certain Bailie Lewis, Alderman Lewis as one would say in the South, who was a prominent figure in the municipal life of Edinburgh about half a century ago. He was on the democratic or popular side of local politics. There was nothing against his character, and he ended reputably enough in some city office, but the Stevensons were on the other side, and strange as it may appear, R. L. S. and his father carried the doctrine of touch not, taste not, handle not to such an extent that it led to the curious change in the spelling of a name.

This trifle is significant. Old Scotland died slowly. The old Scots got the reputation of being good haters. It is difficult to conceive an incident like this in the Edinburgh of to-day.

The Robert was after his grandfather the engineer; the Lewis was from his maternal grandfather, the minister of Colinton, on the northern slope of the Pentlands; the Balfour from the mother's family name. She was descended from the Balfours of Pilrig, a distinguished family, with wide connections, which brought R. L. S. into line, so to speak, with some considerable figures in Scots history. But a chance mention by a great writer confers a vivid and ever present memory more potent than ought else. R. L. S. was justly proud that his grandfather Robert had been honourably named by Scott in the Preface to *The Pirate*. His great-grandfather on the other side was the Rev. Dr. Smith of Galston, in Ayrshire. He twice appears in Burns's verse. The chief mention is—

> Smith opens out his cauld harangues
> On practice and on morals,
> An' aft the godly pour in thrangs
> To gie the jars an' barrels
> A lift that day.

Burns, be it noted, adopts the language of the godly only to mock at them, so both references are highly complimentary. But you doubt if R. L. S. was as pleased with the lines from Burns as with those from Scott. From first to last, and more and more in the last, he was moralist, preacher with

a passion for ethical and theological discussion and dissertation, wherefore his intimates and even acquaintances quoted the "cauld harangues" till he was minded to fling the *Opera* of Robin at their heads.

Ingenious writers have traced the strains of his genius part to one, part to the other side of the house. What he took from the brave and worthy Scots lady who was his mother I cannot say. It were possible to trace everything in him either as action or reaction from his fathers; truer and better to put it down to "the unexpectedness of genius." He arose even as Shakespeare did from a good, sound, middle-class stock, a stock that is the strength of England and Scotland alike. You could not have predicted a wonderful flower of genius from anything in Henley Street at Stratford-on-Avon, and if possible still less from anything in Howard Place in the New Town of Edinburgh.

After two and a half years the family removed to No. 1 Inverleith Terrace, which is but on the other side of the street, so to speak. In 1857 they "flitted" to No. 17 Heriot Row, where they abode for thirty years. Here the father died, and then the family life was at an end, for the son and the mother became wanderers. The son, as we know, came not back, whilst the mother did return to end her days, to die and to be buried, but not at all to establish a new home. The ill-health which pursued him through life was early developed, so that his very existence was largely due to the

devotion of his nurse, Alison Cunningham (1822–1913). It is not rare that the nurse loves the foster-child, whilst there are one or two cases where the foster-child becomes a famous person, so that she magnifies her office and dotes on his memory. But what is rare is that the child should repay with equal devotion yet with no touch of condescending kindness, nay with gratitude and reverence, what has been done for him. R. L. S. did this; pure gratitude is a rare virtue, but he showed it in the highest degree.

Through the influence of parents and nurse his childhood was "Covenanting." The picturesque legend of the Covenant so impressed itself on the imagination of R. L. S. that it became of the very essence of his being. It was a devout period in Scotland. Fifty years earlier, at the beginning of the century, the better middle class took religious matters very easily, but the state of things that led up to the Disruption of 1843, especially the Ten Years Conflict which immediately preceded, caused a quickening of certain phases of religious life. As Mr. W. D. M'Kay has pointed out, it revived the thoughts and sentiments of the Covenanting times. True, the Stevensons remained in the Established Church, but as the Reformation evangelized the Church of Rome itself, so the Disruption quickened the zeal of the remnant that remained. In after years the Free Church was to lead the way in strange advances and into entirely new paths, but that belongs to the history of modern religious thought in Scotland, and is not for us here. Steven-

son never gave sign that he was interested in this last development. Intellectually he had anticipated and outstripped it, but the Covenanting view of things impressed on his imagination during his early years curiously asserted itself more and more towards the end. The "Shorter Catechist," to use Henley's phrase, was never stronger than in Samoa.

The Stevensons, like most Edinburgh folk of their class, left town for the summer months, and ill-health multiplied those absences in the case of their son. He was much at the Manse of Colinton, till his grandfather died in 1860. In 1867 his father took a lease of the house known as Swanston Cottage, also on the northern slope of the Pentlands, two or three miles south-east of Colinton. For fourteen years the family were there, and R. L. S. has made those hills his own. Earlier, the family had been at North Berwick, then and to-day the Edinburgh *Super Mare*, just as Brighton is to London. During these years his education had been going on in a more or less desultory fashion. In 1867 he went to the University. A curious *Sturm und Drang* period, brought about by the collision of opposite forces, followed. As it turned out, R. L. S., who seemed for some time to be steering fair and full on the rocks, made a brilliant success. But we are not to blame his advisers because they took the common-sense view, nor are we to be such worshippers of success as to praise him for the neglect of many ordinary and wise rules. To do so is absurd. On the other hand, there was a method in his madness.

The thing fell out in this way. His father was a distinguished and prosperous engineer. His grandfather had been a very eminent engineer indeed. R. L. S. was an only son. The fates seemed to have settled it beforehand that he must follow his father's calling, the ancestral calling. And on a hasty view there were things in him that pointed in the same direction. At first he acquiesced; he went to the University chiefly to study engineering. From the first he neglected the class of Fleeming Jenkin, the professor of that subject, though with a touch of paradox he became the intimate friend of the teacher himself. Whilst he was neglecting not only this but every other class which he was nominally attending there grew within him the passion for letters, really the passion of his life. Whilst he would have none of the ancestral calling, he laboured in his own vocation with all the ancestral zeal and energy. Himself has told us how he practised, how he kept note-books, how in the very famous and now hackneyed phrase he played "the sedulous ape." But here is another paradox. There is a chair in the University of Rhetoric and English Literature. One would have thought that here at least the sedulous ape would have been a sedulous student. Not a bit of it! He neglected this as well as the others. He became afterwards on friendly terms with the occupant, the late David Masson. Masson is in truth rather a dreary writer, and Lowell's criticism on him in this regard is justified, but he was a profound scholar, a skilled instructor, a genial

and kindly man. His judgments were right, and his taste excellent. Yet this perverse youth would go his own way. And again with the best possible results. Yet he is not to be applauded, for this conduct showed or developed a st ain of weakness in him. He left an enormous deal unfinished, and at critical periods some of his long stories break down.

He carried this neglect of stated times and places to a much greater and more aggravating and perplexing extent. Modern Edinburgh society is conventional, precise, prim, formal, in speech, in thought, in conduct, in dress, much given to formal parties and to formal exchange of civilities. If it does not rise very high, it is determined not to sink very low. It is very exclusive. The Scots Mrs. Grundy is fearfully and wonderfully made, and is an absolute despot. The Stevensons were people of position in Edinburgh and lived in the best social life of the place. All this R. L. S. detested with his whole heart and soul. He would have none of the formal society. He found more humour, more point, more salt in folk at the other end of the social scale. He had friends of his own class, but they were mainly of his own way of thinking. Now he has said of Fergusson, " It was not choice as much as an external fate that kept Fergusson in this round of sordid pleasures. A Scot of poetic temperament drops as if by nature into the public-house. The picture may not be pleasing, but what else is a man to do in this dog's weather ? "

This is almost a confession that he himself "dropped

into the public-house." No doubt he looked on the wine when it was red, or its Scots equivalent. Now the public-house in Edinburgh is a very different thing from the public-house in London. It is frequented by a lower class of people. You can scarcely "use" one in the North, to employ a curious London vulgarism, and continue respectable. There is well-founded reason for this. Liquor in the form of whisky has a certain unholy power over the Scot, and the better his brain and the kinder his heart so much more potent the attraction. The gloom of the climate, the gloom of the national faith, the gloom of the national character, all help to account for this. And yet, by a certain magic, R. L. S. escaped this real and very present danger. If he heard the chimes at midnight, nay, if he lay among the pots, it was but for a season. His physical or mental constitution, his physical and mental delicacy, the strength of his morals or his will, this or something else scared him from the danger to which many a friend succumbed.

Again, from carelessness or perversity, perhaps it may be from inverted pride, Stevenson dressed in the most *outré* fashion. Some men can do this and still look distinguished. R. L. S. to the common eye was not one of them. He was often accepted as no better than a tramp. All this was enough to flutter the family dovecot, but one other element more extreme than all remains. However strong the national faith, however rigid the spirit of Scots Calvinism, there was always a violent opposi-

tion to and reaction from it in certain quarters, and especially of later days, among the younger men at the University. Extreme in belief, the Scot is also extreme in his unbelief. The cheap acquiescence and practical neglect of the Englishman is or at least was not his. Here Stevenson was in accord with many another student. It was impossible but that he should show that he did not think as his fathers had thought on such matters. It is not surprising that the impression R. L. S. produced in Edinburgh, though he was not then a sufficiently important person to make any great impression at all, was that he was a harum-scarum youth who had some skill in putting words together, but who if he did not go under would never make anything of a creditable appearance. It was as such that I first heard of him.

When all is said and done, the two Stevensons, father and son, must have possessed the strongest affection for one another, and elements of understanding and compromise, or they would not have arranged things as they did. Here his father gave in, he could not consent to a career of a man of letters. It was possible, no doubt, the father must have reflected, to make a living by writing. The journalist was a not unfamiliar figure, but again journalism in Scotland had never quite the position it has in England, and for good or for ill there was nothing of the journalist about R. L. S. Now there was the profession of the advocate. It would of itself give a good position. It had the command of one of the finest libraries in the world,

the Stevenson influence was powerful in Edinburgh and was likely to bring about a steady stream of briefs, and if a man could write well he was surely able to talk well, also if he could reason in private he ought to be able to reason in public. Thus R. L. S. turned to law, and in due time was admitted an advocate, 16th July 1875. He did nothing. He neglected the courts as he had neglected the classes.

About these years he was abroad a great deal. During his first visit the Continent attracted him but little, but he soon came to have that love for France which seems part of the nature of the Scot. In the forest of Fontainebleau, and at Barbizon, at Grez, and at Paris, he laid the foundation for that intimate knowledge of French life which he afterwards exhibited. On 30th June 1874 he had been elected member of the Savile Club, which became his London headquarters. Mr. Colvin, as he then was, introduced him to Leslie Stephen, and it was through Stephen that he made the acquaintance of W. E. Henley, then a patient in the Old Infirmary in Edinburgh, on the 13th February 1875. He made an effort to see Carlyle, then in the height of his great power, but he failed. In this failure history had repeated itself. Scott had seen, and only seen Robert Burns. Carlyle failed to see Scott, because Scott was so immersed in business and financial worries and anxieties as to neglect even an introduction from Goethe. Carlyle in turn was ill in body and mind, and at odds with the world in general, or he would have condescended to see

R. L. S., whose fame was possibly to surpass his own. This same year, 1876, was the year of his inland voyage with Sir Walter Simpson. In 1874 his paper on Victor Hugo's romances appeared in the *Cornhill*, his first contribution to that journal, and in the years that followed we had *Travels with a Donkey* and *The New Arabian Nights*, a series that was supposed to account for the unpopularity of the journal called *London* in which they appeared. Such was the criticism of the time on those delicious fantasies.

In 1876 he met Mrs. Osbourne at Grez. She was living separated from her husband. She and Stevenson fell in love with one another, so that when in 1878 she was obliged to return to California he followed next year, without consultation with his parents. He felt that he could scarcely make them understand his position. They did not know the lady or her story. They would have looked at the undeniable fact that she was a married woman, whilst the explanation that it was proposed to obtain a divorce and legally and properly unite the lovers would only have made things worse. Stevenson proposed to earn his living in America as a writer. Perhaps he might, but he never had a proper chance. He was struck down by severe illness. His efforts after work in New York, San Francisco, and Monterey were not very successful, though he was toiling, on his own account, all the time. It was then he wrote *The Pavilion on the Links*, which some English critics have, oddly enough, considered his best story. For the first

and last time in his life he felt the actual pinch of poverty. To this illness was added. He met the strokes of ill-fortune with splendid courage, though the evil days were only matters of months. From April 1880 he was allowed an income of £250 a year from home. It was generous and prudent on the father's part. It preserved as far as we can see the son's life; though it is probable that what he then suffered brought about a bodily state that was to render residence in Europe impossible. Mrs. Osbourne had in the meantime obtained a divorce, and on 19th May 1880 he married her as Fanny Van de Grift at San Francisco.

On 17th August 1880 R. L. S. and his wife landed in Liverpool, where they were met by his father and mother. Mrs. Stevenson the younger endeared herself to the parents of her husband. In every way his choice seems to have been a happy one. Such is his own testimony, and the testimony of his intimate friends. There as elsewhere he was to show the essential wisdom of his action in spite of all appearance to the contrary. But that is only from one point of view. It is difficult to trace the ill-health from which he suffered during the next eight years to anything but his privations during the sojourn in America. He was a young man of a healthy stock. It seemed probable that he would outgrow his early maladies and be strong and well. Everything promised fair. He was happily married, on the best of terms with his parents, not in want of money, finally settled in writing as the business of his life as it was the

darling of his choice, then it was becoming every day more evident that he was going to make a great success; though he came of a famous family he was to be the most famous of them all, if the Stevensons ended with him the end was to be a climax of triumphs. Yet ill-health made the next eight years a long-drawn-out tragedy, only relieved by the invincible cheerfulness and courage of the sufferer, and his constant labour, not merely in the intervals but through days and nights of pain.

In search of health he was driven forth again as an exile to Davos in Switzerland, where the high, pure air of the mountains is deemed excellent for those suffering from any form of consumption. The story of his residence there is the same as it was in every fresh quarter: the change did him good at first, but the benefit was gradually lost. He himself spoke of the exhilaration of the mountain air, though the narrowness of the life pressed upon him. Here, however, he met John Addington Symonds; like him, driven to Davos Platz for reasons of health. Next year he was back in Edinburgh, and the summer found him at Kinnaird Cottage, near Pitlochry. Here he wrote *Thrawn Janet*, *The Merry Men*, and *The Body-Snatcher*. It was from here, too, that he made an effort to obtain the chair of Constitutional Law in the University of Edinburgh. It was a strange thing for Pegasus to run in harness, for the man who had practically condemned University training to desire to turn himself into a wheel of the system. But

the chair was in the gift of the Faculty of Advocates, and is always held by a member of their body, whilst in practice it could not be held by a successful advocate, a man engrossed in the ordinary work of his profession. Thus the competition was considerably restricted. As Sir Sidney Colvin has pointed out, had he succeeded he must have almost immediately resigned, for his ill-health must have prevented him doing the work; but he could not foresee that, and the position seemed eminently desirable. It consisted of an hour's lecture five days in the week for between two and three months in the summer of each year. The lectures are always about the same, so that when you had once written them the chief of your labour was done. The emoluments were an endowment of something like £150 and a fee of £3, 3s. from each student. R. L. S. knew Scots History well, Constitutional History probably not at all. Perhaps he could have got it up. Perhaps not. At any rate, he would have made the dry bones of history live in a way that, you believe, no professor had ever done before.

It is the habit in Scotland to print testimonials of your fitness for such posts, and his were all from men who may fairly be called eminent. It is a note of Scots testimonials that they are pitched in too high a key, but those of Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Colvin were as strong as the others, of which some seem to us now slightly patronizing. The most remarkable is one from Professor Churchill Babington, Disney Professor of Archæology at

Cambridge, which reads—name, designation, and everything—as if it were a lost page of *The New Arabian Nights*. The Professor was a relative of our author, as he had married a Balfour cousin.

He is described by Sir Sidney Colvin as "a Cambridge colleague of mine" and "of learned and amiable memory." It was, however, not to be. Learned bodies must respect themselves; they are not ready to promote those who treat them as negligible quantities. Stevenson had not yet greatly impressed the outer world. Even though Edinburgh geese are said (to themselves and their intimates) always to rank as swans, yet Edinburgh is too old a town and too chill a town eagerly to welcome a budding reputation. Your goose must in his own small way have arrived before he can rank as swan. Stevenson was not elected.

Through the influence of Dr. Japp, who visited him in Braemar to discuss Thoreau, *Treasure Island* was accepted for *Young Folks*, edited by Mr. Henderson. It is creditable to Dr. Japp and to Mr. Henderson that this was so; also it was at Mr. Henderson's suggestion that the name was changed to *Treasure Island* from *The Sea-Cook*. Surely an unpromising name for a romantic story! But you wonder what Stevenson was doing *dans cette galère*. For the serial rights he was getting little more than ten shillings a thousand words. As Andrew Lang says, the market price ought to have been better. Was the literary agent not yet in the land? or were there no publisher's readers? He afterwards got from Cassell's £100 for the book

rights. Yet Mr. Henderson did by no means well with his bargain. His young folk were indignant. In the emphatic language of childhood, it was "rot." Perhaps it was—for children! But Mr. Henderson took another. In *The Black Arrow* R. L. S. wrote himself down for youth with almost complete success. The circulation of *Young Folks* went up by leaps and bounds.

The winter he again spent at Davos, and when he came back to London he was for some time at Weybridge and Burford Bridge. In September 1883 his early friend, James Walter Ferrier, died. He felt the blow keenly, more in some ways than any other loss. Before this he had gone to the Riviera, first near Marseilles and St. Marcel, and then, when driven from there by ill-health, to Hyères. Here, in the Château La Solitude, he and his wife lived from March 1883 till June 1884. It was a delightful place, and for some time at least he was very well, though his rest was broken by a serious illness in January. The doctors thought that if they kept him alive till forty he might go on to old age.

Three years (1884–1887) at Bournemouth followed. Here he did the second series of *The New Arabian Nights*, as well as part of the Plays, though that is a long story. His friend Fleeming Jenkin died in June 1885, to his great sorrow. He afterwards wrote his *Life*. To the Bournemouth time also belong the publication of *A Child's Garden of Verses*; *Kidnapped*, which also first appeared in *Young Folks*, with illustrations; *Olalla*; and in

one sense more important than all, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. With this last Stevenson for the first time emphatically "knocked" the public. It was a great popular success here, and still more in America. He took decisive rank as one of the first popular writers of the time.

On the 8th of May 1887 his father, who had been in failing health, died. He went North on the 6th, but was too ill to attend the funeral. At the end of May he came South. Though he knew it not, he was to return to Lochaber no more. He was never again to see the city and the land for which he cherished so passionate an affection. In August there was another break, for with his wife and widowed mother he left London for America. He was not again to visit England. On the 7th of September the party reached New York. Crowds of reporters and callers, and invitations, and in short all the inconveniences of celebrity, awaited him. He made his home on the shore of Saranac Lake, near the Adirondack Mountains, where he wrote *The Master of Ballantrae*. But his health continued dubious, and it was almost an inspiration of genius that led him to charter the yacht *Casco*, wherein on 28th June 1888 he sailed on what was to be three wandering years in the South Seas.

Here again the question of money was of vital importance. His father's death had placed him in immediate funds, and he was paid for writing in what he thought the American lavish way. At Honolulu he finished *The Master of Ballantrae*.

Finally he made his home at Apia, in Samoa. He bought land and built a house, which he called Vailima, which means the Five Waters. Above it rose the mountain Vaea. Here he did much of his best work. His letters from the South Seas have never been widely popular, but the book entitled *In the South Seas*, compiled from the best of them, is at least eminently readable, though the subject be remote and the treatment often didactic. Here also he did *Catriona*. He began and almost finished *St. Ives*, and he began *Weir of Hermiston*, his last great romance. Various things he started and never lived to complete.

In the closing days of 1893 we picture him as full of life and energy, though not in perfect health, the centrepiece of a large household whose affairs he ruled with prudent wisdom, graver than of yore, perhaps, more of the "Shorter Catechist," following more in the ways of his father and grandfather, though always a modern man, a frequent and generous host, a not rare guest at the houses of native chiefs, and an important political personage in the island—the most romantic of literary figures in modern history, his works and days an object of perpetual interest to educated men throughout the world. And then with appalling suddenness he vanishes from the earthly scene. On the morning of Monday, 3rd December 1894, he was at work and in apparent good health, when he was struck down, and died in the evening at ten minutes past eight. He was buried the next day on the summit of Vaea. On his tomb were

written these lines, his own requiem, well known, yet improper here to omit :—

Ν
1850 ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON Ω
1894

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me;
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

CHAPTER II

A WALK THROUGH STEVENSON'S EDINBURGH

I INVITE the reader to walk with me to the chief places in Edinburgh where R. L. S. lived and worked and played. First we seek the original Stevenson home. Thomas Smith, the stepfather of Robert Stevenson, the grandfather of Louis, built for himself the "land" known as 1 and 2 Baxter Place. Here he lived, and Robert lived, and Thomas also in his early years. Baxter Place is one of the subdivisions of Leith Walk, the name of the long street which leads from Edinburgh to Leith. It is on the east side, almost opposite Picardy Place. That street is on the site of the village of Picardy, where the French weavers of old plied their looms. Baxter Place is a terrace of houses, solid-looking, plain, old-fashioned, all after the pattern of Number 1. Formerly it stood some way back from the street, with a vacant space before it; but ground is now valuable in that locality, so shops are built in front, one story high, and yet leaving ample room for pavement. The age of the house shows it to have been that which Thomas Smith built for himself.

If we walk along Picardy Place it takes us to

Broughton Street, which again reminds us of the old Borough of Barony called Broughton. We turn to the right, and keep on bearing a little to the west, till we come to the Water of Leith, which we cross by a bridge, and are in Howard Place. Thomas Stevenson was married to Miss Balfour in 1848, and it was in this street they made their first home at Number 8. Authors do not choose their own birthplaces, nor do a committee of literary experts. The ideal spot had perhaps been Huntly House in the Canongate. Howard Place is a totally undistinguished street, and Number 8 is also without distinction. It consists of two stories and a sunk basement, marked off by a railing, which is partially masked by creepers. Number 1 Inverleith Terrace, to which they moved when Louis was three, is nearly opposite, but a little farther north. It is all the same street. This has also two stories and a basement. There are two stone vases on the roof by way of decoration. The houses are both of the same class. If the street is commonplace it is cheerful, and has an air of modest prosperity and propriety, conventional but reasonably and properly so.

The way has another connection with letters. W. E. Henley had his abode there during the time in the nineties when he was editing the *Scots Observer*. R. L. S., then in the South Seas, was an occasional correspondent. He contributed his fine lines, *In Memoriam E. H.*, on the death of Henley's mother, and his letter in defence of Father Damien. In talking of him Henley once

called my attention to the fact that he had been born in that street. Even then the house was regarded with interest. The cable tramways grind through Howard Place all day long, turning what would have been a very quiet street into a rather noisy one, but they afford an easy means of getting there from Princes Street.

Thomas Stevenson was a rising man. In 1857 he moved into 17 Heriot Row, which was the family house till his death. This was a decided advance. It has large comfortable rooms. It has three stories, with a basement and stone steps up to the door, fit home for a well-to-do Edinburgh citizen. You gain the Row from Howard Place, either by retracing your steps up by Broughton Street and turning off at Albany Street, or going up by the cable tramway, which cuts through it. Like some of the more favoured Edinburgh streets, it faces gardens; only, as far as Heriot Row is concerned, it loses by doing so the front view of the shores of the Forth and Fife and the Highland hills, that most striking effect which you get from the cross streets of the New Town.

There are points of interest in Heriot Row. It is called after George Heriot, "Jingling Geordie," the famous goldsmith of James VI and I. The ground belongs to the Hospital he founded at Lauriston. At least, the Hospital is the "superior," as it is called in Scotland, or ground landlord. Long ago the place was called "Wood's Farm." Here "Long Sandy Wood," the eccentric Edinburgh surgeon, was born in the farmhouse in 1725. But

that was before the New Town was thought of. Heriot Row is not in the original New Town, which stopped at Queen Street, on the other side of the gardens. It was built early in the nineteenth century, when some fifty years' experience had convinced the citizens that the place was destined to grow and spread to an extent they had never thought of. Henry Mackenzie, the "Man of Feeling," who died in that street on 14th January 1831 at the age of eighty-six, the connecting link between widely different literary periods, used to tell how he shot snipe and all manner of game on Wood's Farm. Other "residenters" almost as well known were the Reverend Archibald Alison and his son, Sir Archibald Alison. The father wrote a once famous *Essay on Taste*, and the son a once famous *History of Europe during the French Revolution*, described by a political partisan, not of the same way of thinking, as a "Tory pamphlet in twenty volumes." The gardens, called the Queen Street Gardens, are reserved for those who inhabit the houses which overlook them. The stranger can only admire through inexorable iron railings the shady walks and the trim-kept plots. It was not always thus. The New Town did not spring into being right off. It is the result of much evolution and change. The gardens were once a neglected spot. It was the land between the first and second New Town; it was no-man's-land, a perfect waste where clothes were hung out to dry. However, some Quintus Curtius of a builder jumped into the gulf, and raised the first house, Number 13.

It was thought a mad speculation; from Queen Street across the waste the solitary pile looked forlorn. But it soon had company, and after some twenty years the gardens were closed in with iron railings, planted with shrubberies, and made generally ornamental. Progress was retarded because the Earl of Wemyss had a house in Queen Street, and the grounds attached to it were shut in by a high wall which stood in the way. However, this was done away with in time. The Earl of Wemyss was said to be the last of the old order of nobles who had his Edinburgh house. However, the Wemyss house passed from the family in the early part of the nineteenth century.

In the gardens evening fêtes were given. Lanterns glittered from the trees. Ladies lightly and elegantly clad flitted over the lawns, and the Edinburgh ragamuffins, gazing in considerable number through the railings, perhaps assumed that the daring experiment was got up for their entertainment. Daring it was, for the east wind must not blow, and the "haar" must hold off, and it must not rain, and these are only some of several assumptions. There was a chance, however, of the perfect evenings with their long-drawn-out magic nightfall that the Scots summer sometimes gives. I saw No. 17 Heriot Row in the autumn of 1912. It was unoccupied and to sell, so had the forlorn air which immediately gathers about the empty house. I know not if the price was raised because it had been the Edinburgh home of R. L. S. for many years. There is still a lamp-post in front of No. 17, but no one

uses a ladder to light street lamps nowadays; doubtless some up-to-date Leerie does it by a touch of his wand.

Those were the homes of R. L. S. in Edinburgh. Next come the places of education between 1857 and 1867. All but one may be dismissed with a word. If you walk westward along Heriot Row you come to a street running north called India Street, where Mr. Henderson had a preparatory school. Mr. Henderson was always reported a careful and accurate teacher. I had some slight acquaintance with him; he struck me as pedantic, but after all that is the way of his calling, especially in its lower walks, and he had no pretension to scholarship, which except in an elementary form cannot count for an advantage in such work. If he did not make very much of R. L. S., no one will blame him. Again, in Frederick Street, which is one of the streets that run north from Princes Street on the line of the cable tramway, a Mr. Thomson kept a school where special attention was given to boys who required it from their health or otherwise. The father thought the system suitable for a boy not in strong health, of curious individual habits and tastes and fancies, that made him unfit for the rough-and-tumble of a schoolboy's life. Here he remained on and off for about three years in 1864–1867. For one term he was at a boarding-school in Spring Grove, Isleworth. Spring Grove is a long suburban, almost semi-rural street beyond Brentford, close to Isleworth Station. In Stevenson's time the rural note was stronger, for miles of houses and several

lines of railway have been added to the locality. The title "Grove" is not quite nominal, as it is planted with a profusion of trees in the street itself and about the houses. Young as he was, for he was but fourteen, it was from his term there that he drew what he ever learned of ordinary English youth. The Spring Grove Academy was the usual English boarding-school of the period, peopled by average John Bull types. He did not like them, though in the *Foreigner at Home* he has a just and far-sighted criticism of the class—from his point of view.

He was at the Edinburgh Academy for a year and a half, and that important institution, both in itself and to himself the most important of his schools, calls for some mention. It is not quite a hundred years old. The conception occurred to Lord Cockburn, who lived at Bonaly Tower, not far from Colinton, on the slope of the Pentlands, as he took one of his favourite walks on the hills. It was to be a classical school on the English model. Dr. Johnson's sneers at Scots learning struck deep. The weakness of Scots youth in quantities, which Pitcairne and Professor Dalzel, though clerk to the General Assembly, had ascribed to the Solemn League and Covenant, was to be remedied. With Lord Cockburn was Sir Walter Scott as another founder. It seems curious that two such pronounced Scots should have hankered after English methods. The foundation stone was laid on the 30th June 1823 on ground "fued," or obtained on perpetual lease in the language of the South, from the Governors of Heriot's

Hospital. Its masters, head and otherwise, have often been English scholars, sometimes English churchmen; and in the school the now almost obsolete, and, one may say, discredited method of pronouncing Latin as if it were English was adopted. It became, and continued for many years, the fashionable Edinburgh school. An Archbishop of Canterbury, a Lord Chancellor, many eminent Professors and Senators of the College of Justice, were pupils. In less than fifty years—namely, in June 1863—Fettes College was founded on the slope of Comely Bank, between Edinburgh and the Firth. It was a more exact model of an English public school than the Academy could pretend to be, and deprived the Academy of its place as the first classical school of Edinburgh. It was inevitable that a boy, a day scholar of the position of R. L. S., should attend the Academy, and so he did. It is some half-mile as the crow flies due north from Heriot Row. It is in Henderson Row, long, one story in height, of classical aspect, with a Latin inscription and a Greek motto inscribed on its walls. There is a huge gravel playground in front, and a considerable gate with square stone pillars. Next to it on the west is the Deaf and Dumb Institute. Many a moral and many a sage reflection, to the most opposite effect, however, have been drawn from the juxtaposition of the two buildings. The street is on the downward grade, a poor locality for a famous school; but the ups and downs of city life in Edinburgh have played wilder pranks. R. L. S. in after years addressed in witty and cheerful Scots

verse a dinner club of his former class-mates. It began—

> Dear Thamson class, whaure'er I gang
> It aye comes ower me wi' a spang,
> "Lordsake! thae Than on lads (deil hang,
> Or else the Lord mend them!)
> An' that wanchancy annual sang
> I ne'er can send them!

The "Thamson" referred to was Mr. d'Arcy Wentworth Thompson, who was afterwards Professor of Greek in Queen's College, Galway. His *Day-Dreams of a Schoolmaster* made a considerable sensation in their own day.

In after years R. L. S. regretted that he had not been at the High School, which you trace back to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Once it stood where is now the Old Infirmary, but in the years 1825–29 it was removed to the southern slope of the Calton Hill. It is a beautiful and imposing building. Looking up to it from the [illegible] Churchyard in certain lights, you get [illegible] itectural effect in new Edinburgh. [illegible] show it "bears the gree" above the Academy; perhaps the Town Council had an eye on Henderson Row when they piled those stones together, but they did not recapture the genteel citizen. Thomas, the father of R. L. S., had attended the High School, and had walked in the procession of boys from the old site to the new. It was not this that weighed with Louis. It was that the High School was antique, essentially Scots, and Edinburgh Scots.

We must now turn our steps to the University, the old College in South Bridge Street, the classes of which Louis attended, or made the pretence of attending, for some years. Here you are emphatically reminded that the Edinburgh of R. L. S. is not the Edinburgh of to-day. The new Infirmary in the Meadows, the new University buildings in Teviot Place, the huge M°Ewan Hall, and other great erections to the west of the old College, throw it into the shade; nay, the design of Adam the architect had not then been fully carried out, for it was not till 1887 that the dome was supplied. Student life has become more corporate and a little more regulated since his time. It is still marked by much individualism. A student is left to the freedom of his own will. He lives anywhere and anyhow. He must attend the classes or he does not get the class certificate; but the roll is not called every day, and the professors are fairly lenient. Louis was so outrageous and even ostentatious an absentee that he had difficulty on several occasions.

If you walk over the North and South Bridge southward, you soon come to the old College on the right hand. It is a huge classical building. There is a raised way by which you can walk round; from this the classrooms open—such as are on that floor at any rate, for there are others above. During the session every hour the bell clangs, and a tide of youth sweeps out, part through the huge gate to the street, the others broken up into eddies and cross currents as they stream into other rooms. This is changing classes, and if you follow them into

one of the rooms, you will find a man in a gown seated on a platform talking to a number of students who sit on benches of different altitudes, so that all may see and be seen. Most appear to be taking notes, though on the least excuse, or without excuse, they break into violent applause. Such were the classes that Louis attended, or did not attend. Let one who has been through the mill speak the truth about it. If you are interested in the subject, anxious to get a prize, keen to do well, the hour passes speedily by, and may be called enjoyable. If the subject or its treatment be distasteful, or you have no ambition in that direction, nothing can be more dreary and distasteful than that never-ending hour. Without actual physical pain, it afflicts the unfortunate student with a sense of extreme misery. Idleness and inattention are their own severest punishment. Once lose interest in the classes, and failure to attend is almost inevitable. Thus the case of Louis is not solitary or even exceptional. Only he was a man of genius.

One feature of the University is the students' debating societies. These hold meetings usually weekly in the evenings. R. L. S. belonged to the most famous of these—to wit, the Speculative Society. With him here were James Walter Ferrier and Charles Baxter, his devoted friends in after life. He has described the rooms—"a hall, Turkey-carpeted, hung with pictures, looking, when lighted up with fire and candle, like some goodly dining-room; a passage-like library walled with books, and their wire cages; and a corridor with a fire-place, benches,

a table, many prints of famous members, and a mural tablet to the virtues of a former secretary." This Stevenson attended for about three years, with considerable irregularity. Another University institution, not so reputable, though in its way quite respectable, must be noted, for R. L. S. was there not infrequently. In a letter of 6th September 1888 we have: "All I hoped and feared, as I pickled about Rutherford's in the rain and the east wind." He goes on to say how things had come out much better than he expected—that "I should like the incident set upon a brass plate at the corner of that dreary thoroughfare for all students to read, poor devils, when their hearts are down." Now the "dreary thoroughfare" referred to is Drummond Street. The old College is on the west side of and faces South Bridge Street; Drummond Street is opposite, on the east side. Along the north of it ran the old town wall, Flodden Wall as it was always called, and here too was the house of Kirk o' Field. Kirk o' Field itself was where is now the old College —famous as the scene of the murder of Darnley, the great tragedy of Mary's reign, and the immediate cause of her ruin. The "Rutherford's" mentioned by R. L. S. is and was a small public-house restaurant, one of several held by the same firm in Edinburgh and Leith. It was a "howf," to use a Scots expression, or haunt of R. L. S. by day or by night. It is the habit in Scotland to divide such places by wooden partitions into little rooms, each with a table in the centre, a cushion bench surrounding the table, and a bell to summon the

attendant. When the door is shut, you obtain that privacy dear to many a Scot, to whom the imbibing of liquor is an act of dear, sinful enjoyment. These little rooms are technically termed "boxes." They form no bad resort from an inclement Edinburgh night, with its rain and wind; no bad place for talk on art or morals, or letters, or what not. And so Rutherford's, which I take as a type of its class, is not to be neglected by the thorough Stevensonian.

But *paulo majora canamus*. We move on to the Parliament House opposite St. Giles'. Louis was admitted an advocate on 15th July 1875. Custom requires young advocates to walk the ancient hall where the Parliament of Scotland once sat, and so is still called the Parliament House, for several hours in the forenoon. As most of the legal youth walk there to no profitable purpose, it is truly a *salle des pas perdus*. The hall is one of the finest in Scotland, which is not rich in such monuments of the past. It has a noble oak roof, a stained-glass window representing the foundation of the College of Justice by James V, many portraits and busts of famous lawyers. The courts open off it, and underneath in the Laigh (or low) Parliament House is the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, one of the very best in Britain, and very much the best in Scotland. It was founded by Sir George Mackenzie on the eve of the Revolution, and its books occupy the very space where the "Bluidy Advocate" and his fellows tortured the Covenanters. The sorrows of the unsuccessful lawyer

do not excite the sympathy of the outside world. He is usually a man of some little means, so that actual want is a very remote possibility. His life is dreary enough for all that, so the daily promenade became speedily as intolerable to R. L. S. as even college classes had been. And it was even easier to get rid of. Nothing shows that he even betook himself to the library to any extent. In after years, fate prepared for him a curious Nemesis. He was writing on Scots history, and required books not easily to be come at, old files of the extinct *Edinburgh Courant*, Lauder of Fountainhall's *Decisions*, and so forth. Such of those as he could procure he procured with great difficulty, loss of time, temper, and money. In those early years their use was to be had for a word, but that word was not spoken.

Your interest in R. L. S. will lead you to visit, at least, three Edinburgh graveyards. His *Picturesque Notes* is the gem of all books on Edinburgh, and the gem of the *Notes* is Greyfriars. Yet he expresses a literary rather than a personal interest. For that you must seek the graveyards on the slopes of the Calton. Now the Calton has a history long before the days of its prison and its monuments, classic or Gothic, its fine buildings, and its ways, paved or otherwise. The Calton was like Broughton, a Borough of Barony in the old days. The superior was Lord Balmerino, who on the slope of the hill made a burying-ground for his tenants or vassals, as they were called in Scots law, which used with quaint and picturesque effect

numerous feudal terms, the words of a vanished world. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, when Regent Road was made, the burying-ground was of necessity cut right through. The soil, a very debris of humanity, was removed to the new Calton burying-ground, which is a little way eastward, also on the south slope of the hill. It is in this new Calton burying-ground that his father was interred, with other members of the family. But R. L. S. took more interest in the other—at least, so we gather from his written word; for he means it when, in that brilliant essay called *Old Mortality*, he says: "In the hot fits of youth I came to be unhappy." It is densely crowded. The most famous grave is that of David Hume, a round, Roman-like tower, which accident and history, rather than design, make strikingly, almost startlingly, prominent, from various spots in the city, especially from the North Bridge. There is also a high obelisk, called the Martyrs' Monument, erected in 1844 to the memory of Thomas Muir and his fellows, who were tried, and banished from Scotland in 1793, by Stevenson's idol, Lord Braxfield.

This essay has some splendid passages on the last days of his friend James Walter Ferrier. *His* grave is not in any of those three, but in that which lies around St. Cuthbert's Church, as Henley has recorded in memorable lines—

> Our Athos rests—the wise, the kind,
> The liberal and august, his fault atoned,
> Rests in the crowded yard
> There at the west of Princes Street.

This last place of tombs has no mention from him, yet it was often under his eye, since on its west side it borders the Lothian Road, which is referred to more than once by him in a half-jesting, half-serious fashion, as a familiar if not favourite promenade. It dates from about a century ago, and the legend runs that, in accordance with a bet made by Clerk of Penicuik, it was constructed, however roughly, in one day. A poor woman, it is said, who had a cottage there, quitted it one morning to attend to her affairs in town. In the evening it had clean vanished, and a broad thoroughfare stood in its place. The Lothian Road may be called the Tottenham Court Road of Edinburgh. It is a broad, but you cannot say noble, street. One house of entertainment in it was a favourite haunt of our author. In a letter of May 1894 to Mr. Baxter he comically suggests that the Edinburgh edition should be called the Lothian Road edition, with the picture of the old Dutch lugger in the corner. The "Dutch lugger" was the name he gave to the landlord of the house he frequented. In another letter he talks of it as rather a convivial place, but most would class it with Leith Walk, another street where the fates willed that R. L. S. should be often present, as a dreary thoroughfare not old enough to have the charm of antiquity, not new enough to have that of novelty.

Such were the homes and chief haunts of R. L. S. in the city of his birth. But Edinburgh presents itself to us in connection with him in another aspect. It was his favourite literary subject, never more

so than when he was far away from it in time or space. It is quite another kind of Edinburgh that we have now to visit and examine, an Edinburgh that is only very partially that of his own day, much of it vanished ere he was born ; the Edinburgh of his writings.

CHAPTER III

EDINBURGH IN FACT AND FANCY

THE feelings of R. L. S. for Edinburgh were a mixture of opposites. The wind, the wet, the chill, the gloom affected him with a physical loathing for which there was good reason, since he must have died had fate confined him within its bounds. Likewise he detested the rigid conventions of the class to which he belonged. He was set to uncongenial tasks. The forms of religion practised in the place called forth his anger and contempt. They seemed to him to miss what religion really was. On the other hand, the city had a powerful attraction for him, which grew stronger the farther he was distant from it. When he was there, the events of every day, something cross-grained in the weather and the folk, acted as a continual irritant; but far off those pinpricks were forgotten, and Auld Reekie asserted over him a singular, a peculiar charm—partly because he was a native, as well as a Scot among Scotsmen, but chiefly that it suited as no other place ever could the peculiar bent of his genius as man of letters. The town, the people, the history, the legends, all were material ready made to his hand. Had he not been a Scotsman, it is possible that he might have neglected

Edinburgh altogether as subject, though even then, had he known as much of it as he afterwards did of London or Paris, he would have written something noteworthy about it. However this may be, had he been born elsewhere in Scotland, he must have made Edinburgh his chief literary subject. Aberdeen or even Stirling would not have been rich enough in matter; and as for Glasgow—what was there in Glasgow, past or present, to attract him?

As prelude to what follows, a few words on this famous city will be in place. The Edinburgh of history and romance is a very small portion of the town of to-day, but it is that small portion with which R. L. S., and we after him, are mainly concerned. Two miles or over from the Firth of Forth there rises a mass of hills. One of these running east and west has a nearly perpendicular western flank. On its eastern side it descends to the plain in a slope of about a mile. The western summit is the Castle rock. At the bottom of the eastern descent is the palace of Holyrood; the ground between is the High Street, which the Canongate continues to Holyrood. To the north and south of the ridge narrow ways called closes descend to the level. On the north there lay at the bottom for centuries the Nor' Loch. The closes to the south finish in the Cowgate, which thus is parallel with the High Street. The Cowgate runs westward into the open place of the Grassmarket, and from it southward there are, or were, other closes by which you reach various famous places such as Greyfriars and the College. A wall called the Flodden Wall, because

it was run up in desperate haste after that battle as defence against an English invasion believed to be imminent, ringed and fenced all this in, save for the Nor' Loch, for that of itself was sufficient protection. The wall stopped at the end of the High Street. Holyrood as well as the Canongate, which of old was independent of the city, were likewise beyond the wall. The ground was small space for a capital city, even for a poor kingdom like Scotland, but the limits for some centuries were rigidly observed; wherefore, partly from necessity, partly from French example, story was piled on story as the population pressed, so that the houses grew higher and higher, till from one side you had ten or twelve or fourteen or more stories. All the land between the city and the sea was wild and bare, subject to some form of cultivation no doubt, but sparsely inhabited. If you came from the northward any night during all those centuries, you had the blazing illumination of this town hung in air, built as it were between earth and heaven.

There are other elements of attraction, for Edinburgh is set about with hills, Arthur's Seat featuring a lion to the south of Holyrood, the Calton Hill to the north, the Braid Hills at some distance to the south, the imposing mass of the Pentlands to the west. More than all, from any moderate height you have the prospect of that arm of the sea, the Firth of Forth, and beyond it the hills of Fife; nay, in certain aspects of weather there loom beyond and behind, dimly visible yet how suggestive, the

frowning mass of the Highland ranges. Those hill views are the most surprising of Edinburgh effects. From the grime and toil of the Canongate you look overhead into quiet nooks of Arthur's Seat; from the Castle your eye conveys you on the instant to remote recesses where your feet will never tread.

The last great historic event in Edinburgh—the last when it caught for a time the serious attention of the world—was the romantic occupation by Prince Charles Edward Stuart in the '45. When the Highlanders left the city, and the music of their pipes was lost in the distance, the history of Edinburgh came in many ways to an end; and then, by one of the contrasts of which her history is full, the era of wealth and intellectual splendour commenced. Dunedin awoke from the Stuart dream, that vision of the past. The North Bridge was thrown over the ravine. The Nor' Loch was drained, and on its north side the New Town arose of splendid buildings, and great wide streets, and roomy spaces, and everybody who was anybody went to live there. Then the great houses in the High Street, which had once sheltered the old Scots nobles and judges and divines, became the homes of the poorest of the poor, so that you had another remarkable contrast. Ever since, Edinburgh has gone on growing in size and numbers; and as for wealth, though you could not compare it with Glasgow, yet to the poverty-stricken Scot of a couple of centuries ago its riches would seem fabulous and its prosperity beyond belief.

There is another side to the picture. It is a learned and cultured town, never more so than at

the present day; but it is not the home of genuine creative talent or epoch-making writers, and its folk, if correct and better-behaved, are neither so witty, so remarkable, nor so entertaining as their old-time forbears. R. L. S. was the last writer of genius that Edinburgh has produced. The climate, you may believe, is much the same; but then, by an odd but not singular case of forgetfulness, the builders of the New Town never thought of wind and weather, and their long straight streets and wide open spaces were a pressing invitation for rain cloud and storm cloud and tempest to take them for playground and the scene of their wildest pranks. Fergusson was of the Old Town, which he frankly praises as weather-tight, especially to those "panged" with that inner spirituous lining which no citizen of Old Edinburgh was like to forget.

Here in town prospects you have the very essence of the picturesque and the romantic. Those were elements attractive to a writer like Stevenson, and not to him alone. Fergusson, his unhappy predecessor on those same stones, as he named him, was like minded; only, as he lived in the place nearly all his short life, the charm was even greater. Scott felt this potent attraction. He has summed it up in one brilliant phrase: "Mine own romantic town." Yet it did not attach to his more robust nature in the same enveloping, haunting, clinging way. With the two others it is the devotion of the lover to his mistress. They are overpowered with the charm of their birthplace. To its devotees, Edinburgh has the strange magic of a dream-city. In memory

and fancy it is a part of cloudland. Even as they walk its streets it seems not altogether compounded of the ordinary working world. In it the past is more alive than the present, the dead more potent than the living. Its romantic aspects, its great hills, its history, all blend together to influence the mind. The writings of R. L. S. have the peculiar quality of charm: he caught much of it from this city of romance. For she is romantic from first to last —in her history, in her aspects, in her evolution.

Destiny or character made the events of Edinburgh history happen in the most impressive manner. Take one case—the murder of Darnley. How crowded it is with picturesque incident! You have the last parting of the Queen and her Consort, the return of Mary to Holyrood in a glitter of flashing torches and gleaming steel, her passage up the Blackfriars Wynd, whilst the conspirators were dragging down the adjacent Todricks Close the bags of powder meant to fire the house of Kirk o' Field; the ball at Holyrood House, from whose feverish gaiety Bothwell steals at midnight on his fearful business; more than all, the terrible minutes when he and his fellows crouched to the earth, waiting for the explosion that was to herald in one of the great far-reaching events of history. R. L. S. has not dealt with this scene at all, for he did not handle great themes, but it is only one of a hundred. Thus for him the history of Edinburgh had potent attraction from the very setting of the incidents. He is also a writer with a genius for the supernatural, delicately and yet powerfully introduced, controlled by a fine

literary sense. Old Edinburgh was pre-eminently a town of the supernatural. If the sense of reality gets confused with you to-day, it was more so with the old-world citizen. The unseen was ever present to him. Legends of ghosts and demons attached themselves to its ways and houses: nay, some closes, as Mary King's Close, some houses, as that of Major Weir, were the peculiar property of dark and evil spirits; the living dared not dispute their possession, so that they were left tenantless. Each dwelling-place of any pretension bore a pious motto like an amulet or charm to ward off the evil power of Satan and his lesser devils, ever potent, ever present to the fancy of Old Edinburgh. R. L. S. had drunk in those legends and reproduced or imitated or was inspired by them; for though he preached and practised the doctrine of cheerfulness, yet in life and letters the gloomy, the squalidly picturesque, the criminal had for him a potent attraction. You have all these elements in the past of the capital.

In its darker aspects it was cruel and evil. Argyll gloating over the bound and captive Montrose, his fallen enemy from Moray House, the choicest spectacle of a wedding feast; the divines that like vultures watched the last agonies of this chivalrous gentleman; and, on the other side, the Cavaliers themselves, who hounded those same divines to their death and set up their limbs on city gates, are no pleasing spectacles, yet as characteristic of the time and the place as the splendid deeds of daring and chivalry. Then there is a long roll of ingenious, determined, and remorseless criminals,

of villains literally of the deepest dye. As literary subject R. L. S. dearly loved a villain: John Silver, David Pew, and Deacon Brodie are set forth in his pages with a certain touch of sympathy. The criminal annals of our author's birthplace are peculiarly rich. That was not the least of its attractions for him.

One physical fact of the climate of Edinburgh peculiarly impressed itself on his sensitive nature—that is, the prevalence, you might say the supremacy, of the wind which riots there as it does nowhere else. Its peculiar passionate, wailing, almost animal sound, as of a wild beast in pain, its mournful lower notes, its "infinite wail," as if it bore the sorrows of the countless generations of the place, their woes and their crimes, are set forth by him in many passages. I recall no other writer who has spoken so much and in so many different ways of the wind. He drew this direct from his own experience in his birthplace.

Two points are characteristic in his treatment of Edinburgh. He assumes in his reader a knowledge of the town, and does not explain where one locality is with reference to another. If you don't know you ought to, or you must get up your knowledge elsewhere. If you write of London or Paris you may fairly do this; the case is more doubtful in regard to the Scots capital. Some knowledge of the Castle and Holyrood, and perhaps Princes Street, may be taken for granted, but who save the native ever heard of Murrayfield or Inverleith quarry? The same intimate knowledge was assumed in the famous "Chaldee Manuscript,"

which appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1817. It is full of precise local hits, yet it has some permanent place in letters. But, after all, the "Manuscript" was mainly addressed to the town itself; also in 1817 Edinburgh was a more important literary centre than it was fated to be the greater part of a century after. But R. L. S. has a cosmopolitan audience; he speaks not merely *urbi*, but *orbi*. Distant readers might reasonably expect localities to be made plain to them. He handles Old Edinburgh in like fashion. The Luckenbooths, the Gallow Lee, on the way to Pilrig, are introduced as familiar objects without note or comment, though both have long vanished. Possibly a future age may justify the assumption R. L. S. tacitly makes. You must get up a whole biographical dictionary of forgotten lives, a whole geography of obscure villages, to read your Burns with complete understanding. A large body of admirers accept and perform the task. The ardent Stevensonian must fulfil a like labour of love fully to comprehend and perfectly enjoy Stevenson's Edinburgh. He is far less explicit than Scott. So much for the first point; the second is, the places have their real names. He does not invent or pervert, as he does elsewhere, in a quite outrageous manner, as we shall presently discover. Also he commonly gives the name right out, so that, at any rate, it is possible, from reasonably accessible sources, to get a knowledge of the place, present or past, existing or vanished. Some such notes I now propose to give.

CHAPTER IV

EDINBURGH IN THE WORKS

THE scenes of some of the most important of the works of R. L. S. are laid in Edinburgh. In others there are references to it. He is "still harping" on it at all times and places. "After all," he writes to Mr. Baxter, "new countries, sun, music, and all the rest, can never take down our gusty, rainy, smoky, grim old city out of the first place that it has been making for itself in the bottom of my soul." When he was forty-two he notes to Sir J. M. Barrie that they both made their "stages in the metropolis of the winds, our Virgil's 'grey metropolis,' and I count that a lasting bond. No place so brands a man." He laments to Mr. Crockett that he would never see Auld Reekie again. To come would be suicide, yet could he once arrange his affairs, he would risk it, even though he must inscribe his trunks: "Passenger to—Hades." Also he remarks to Sir Sidney Colvin, "How singular that I should fulfil the Scots destiny throughout, and live a voluntary exile, and have my head filled with the blessed, beastly place all the time." You turn to more formal and finished works. Here the same note rings clear and strong. In his verse he

pictures "the grimy spell of the nocturnal town." Even when he is dying, and

> The voice of love
> Falls insignificant on my closing ears,
> What sound shall come but the old cry of the wind
> In our inclement city!

And again—

> The voice of generations dead
> Summons me sitting distant to arise,
> My numerous footsteps nimbly to retrace,
> And all mutation over, stretch me down
> In that denoted city of the dead.

Over all the leagues of sea and land that lie between, the town is present to his physical sense—

> Hearkening, I heard again,
> In my precipitous city, beaten bells
> Winnow the keen sea wind.

There are no more beautiful passages in English prose than those wherein he glorifies Edinburgh. In *The Silverado Squatters* he calls it "the quaint grey-castled city where the bells clash of a Sunday, and the wind squalls, and the salt showers fly and beat." And again: "I will say it fairly, 'It grows on me with every year. There are no stars so lovely as Edinburgh street lamps.' When I forget thee, Auld Reekie, may my right hand forget its cunning." In the preface to *The Master of Ballantrae* he talks of himself as an "old, consistent exile," who revisits now and again the city of which he exults to be a native; and as he sits down to dinner with Mr. Johnston Thompson, W.S. (Mr. Charles Baxter),

he remarks, "He had already almost forgiven himself his two unpardonable errors—that he should ever have left his native city, or ever returned to it." In the dedication to *Catriona* he speaks of "the venerable city which I must always think of as my home." There are "purple patches" as gorgeous as those, but I may not set them down here.

I turn to his individual works. First comes *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh*, which is professedly an account of the city, the best account in existence, as brief as it is good, full of vivid, illuminating, and characteristic touches. Here be a few gathered at random: "Beautiful as she is, she is not so much beautiful as interesting." Again: "Like the King of the Black Isles, it is half alive and half a monumental marble." And yet again: "To look over the South Bridge and see the Cowgate below full of crying hawkers, is to view one rank of society from another in the twinkling of an eye."

Let us next take *Kidnapped* and its sequel *Catriona*. Towards the end of *Kidnapped* the hero, David Balfour, enters the town by the West Port, of which the name still survives in the south-west corner of the Grassmarket. The time is 1751, when as yet Edinburgh was the old walled city edged in by stonework, the Castle rock, and the water of the Nor' Loch. So David could not have got in conveniently by any other way. His nearest alternative route would have been by the Lang Dykes, where is now Princes Street. Then he must cut across the dam at the east of the Nor' Loch, and get through the wall at the Port at the bottom of Halkerston's Wynd, on

the line of the present North Bridge, though at a much lower level, and so hit the High Street at the Tron Kirk, by which his actual route would also take him. His destination was the British Linen Company's Bank, in front of which he suddenly finds himself. In fiction this was the favourite bank of R. L. S., no doubt because the curious development of a linen company into a bank caught him. It was incorporated in 1746 to manufacture and deal in linen wares, but concluded that occupation in 1763, when it confined itself exclusively to its banking business. The offices were first at Tweeddale's Court, on the south side of the High Street, near the Netherbow Port. They were removed to Moray House in the Canongate, and again to St. Andrew Square, where they now are, but they were at Tweeddale's Court during David's visit, and for half a century afterwards. A mysterious crime afterwards made this court or close famous, or infamous. On the evening of 13th November 1806, about five o'clock, William Begbie, a messenger of the bank, was here found murdered. He had been robbed of some £4000. The money was afterwards recovered, but no one was ever punished for the crime. Nay, it was only after the death of James Mackoul, a notorious criminal, that he was surmised the author. A good deal of evidence, though nothing conclusive, pointed that way. R. L. S. refers to this murder in his *Picturesque Notes*, chapter iv., which deals with legends. The court or close is, and has long been, the head-quarters of Oliver & Boyd, an old-established printing and publishing house,

producers of a yearly almanac, indispensable to the Edinburgh citizen.

Kidnapped appeared in 1886, *Catriona* in 1893, during which considerable interval David remains in the bank kicking his heels, or doing whatever characters in fiction do in the intervals of their existence. However, the spell is finally broken, and in the sequel David comes out of the bank, and walks westward up the street to the Luckenbooths, in one of whose shops he is properly fitted out. The Luckenbooths were a peculiar feature of Old Edinburgh. They were a huge mass of buildings running parallel to St. Giles', placed between it and the north side of the High Street. As you see it to-day, the space between St. Giles' and the north pavement is not spacious; then it was shrunk to a straight passage. There was a still narrower footway between the Luckenbooths and the church, also impeded, since open booths called the Krames were plastered against the St. Giles' wall. The Luckenbooths meant the closed booths in contradistinction to the others. At this very time Allan Ramsay the poet kept shop at the east end of the Luckenbooths, so that with him David might have had a "crack," had he or his creator been so disposed. But the young man was after merchandise other than books. The Luckenbooths dated from the time of James III, and were only pulled down in 1817. It was in a close off the High Street that David for the first time saw Catriona with "her wonderful bright eyes like stars." She lived behind the village of Dean, which is on the north side of the

Water of Leith. You look down to-day on the remains, or at any rate the site of this village, for the last of it vanished in 1881, from the lofty Dean Bridge (built 1832). Since our author's time the parapet has been raised; the incitement to a terrible flying leap was too great if you were inclined to a swift and dramatic exit from life. The abyss had an alluring fascination of its own; thus the Bridge had got itself as evil a name as the Monument in London ere its summit was caged.

Pilrig is David's next house of call. He leaves the town by the Netherbow Port, at the east end of the High Street; then turning sharp to the left, goes northward by Leith Wynd. He passes round the base of the Calton, and over Mouters Hill, where is now the Register House, and then by the village of Picardy, inhabited by French weavers. A gibbet (by no means the only one that Edinburgh possessed) is fair in his view, for between Edinburgh and Leith was a place of execution special to those given to unholy dealings with the other world, and desperate criminals of a like nature. Here Major Weir and his staff were ended in the same fire. He continues along Leith Walk till he reaches Pilrig, "a pleasant gabled house, set by the Walk side amongst some brave young woods." Pilrig House still stands, though to-day grimy houses and dreary ways hem it round. It has been enlarged, yet you easily trace the first form. It is genuine, interesting, and characteristic. There was probably an old peel tower on the spot, and Pil Rig means a ridge of some sort.

Tradition will have it a country house of Mary of Gueldres, Queen of James II, the lady who founded Trinity College Church and Hospital, where is now the Waverley Station. The folk of the house are told of in a later chapter.

Next day was Sunday, and David duly attends service at the West Kirk—that is, St. Cuthbert's, under the Castle. You may call it the mother church of the New Town, whose parishes have chiefly been carved out of this parish. During the Highland occupation of Edinburgh in the '45, the Rev. Neil M'Vicar, the incumbent, distinguished himself by praying for the welfare of King George in this world and a crown of glory for Prince Charlie in the next. David had not the privilege of sitting under this divine, who dropped down dead in 1747, just as he was beginning his sermon. The hero tells us that he paid little attention to the discourse; perhaps he lost not much, as the charge was then held by M'Vicar's successor, the Rev. George Kay, A.M., of whom fame has preserved the scantiest record. He was minister of the second charge, the first being vacant.

Later in the week we find David in Hope Park, by the Bruntsfield Links, then a fair space, but now built over. He fights an abortive duel in the King's Park, which, alike from its wild solitude and its nearness to the city, was a favourite place for affairs of honour. He drinks at St. Margaret's Well on his way back. This feat you may yourself perform to-day, but I do not quite see how David did, for it was not till 1862 that the Well was removed to its present site from Restalrig, where

it was threatened with hideous and prosaic destruction by the workshops of the North British Railway. He afterwards goes through the Sanctuary. This was a delimited space round the palace of Holyrood, where debtors were safe from arrest. Imprisonment for debt was abolished in Scotland in 1880, up to which time the Sanctuary had its own life; but its privileges are now in abeyance, and the "Lairds of the Abbey," as the debtors were of old time humorously named, have clean vanished.

You will remember that David met Alan Breck by appointment in the woods at Silvermills. This was then a quiet little village on the Water of Leith, though to-day it is but a word for monotonous streets. It is suggested that the name was derived from a silver mine, the property of "Tam o' the Coogate," as the first Earl of Haddington was nicknamed by his royal master, James VI. This sagacious nobleman, in and out of season, kept dropping mysterious hints as to the fecundity of "God's blessing," his pet name for his mine. The fancy of Solomon caught fire. "A Prince, and only a Prince," quoth he, "ought to possess this precious treasure"; so for £5000 he got it for his own, whereupon the vein of silver incontinently vanished. There is nothing new under the sun, so you rather suspect that far-seeing Tam had "salted" the mine. Silvermills lies somewhat to the south of the Edinburgh Academy; thus the little Louis passed by it every time he went to that school. The way of Alan Breck and his friend was eastward by Broughton, one of those little

villages which expanding Edinburgh long since obliterated. It was where Broughton Street and Barony Street now stand, on the way between Edinburgh and Leith. A barony was a small place under a lord, not altogether unlike an English manor. Lochend, farther on, with its old house and its little loch, is a fragment of the antique world not altogether vanished.

The pair reach the sea at the Figgate Whins. At the date of the story, these had still a bad name as a haunt of smugglers and robbers. In 1742, an old sea salt, who had served under Admiral Vernon at the taking of Portobello in 1739, and had laid hands on a noble quantity of pieces of eight and what not as his share of the booty, built a house on this lonely waste, to which he retired in the enjoyment of his gains, well or ill gotten. He named his abode Portobello. It vanished as late as 1862, when round it had grown the populous suburb which bears that name. It is to Edinburgh what Southend is to London, though the connection is more close and intimate. As you hurry along on the tramway, you may chance to note on the southern side of the main way the Fishwives' Causeway. It is an old Roman road, along which the fishwives were wont to convey the spoil of the deep for sale in Auld Reekie. Down it marched Prince Charlie and the clans in all their ragged bravery towards the field of Prestonpans.

So much for Edinburgh in the middle of the eighteenth century. *St. Ives* is concerned with it in the second decade of the nineteenth. Its interest

centres round the Castle, which impressed itself upon R. L. S. more than any other spot in Edinburgh, almost to the exclusion of Holyrood, which has a more pathetic and romantic charm. He was a New Town boy, and so was often in Princes Street, its main and most important thoroughfare. From thence the Castle is prominent, dominating the scene around. In history the Castle is the root from which all Edinburgh grew and developed. Thus he was led to tell the story of a French prisoner of war in the vaults of the fortress. Those vaults are under the great or Parliament Hall. Partly excavated from the solid rock, they are dark and dismal. From the middle of the eighteenth century to the time of Waterloo they were used as a place of confinement for war captives, as many as forty men being cooped for the night in a single vault. Many names or initials or inscriptions cut by these in the rock still remain. Little is known of those mournful depths. They are not shown to the public, nor is there any ground for believing that R. L. S. explored them. In later days his name had acted as an open sesame, but he had not conceived the story until he had left Scotland far behind. It is not known when those vaults were cut out, possibly before any building now on the hill was thought of. Your dungeon was an integral part of your old-time castle. If you caught your enemy, and did not end him at once, you needs must hold him fast. To do so above ground was difficult and troublesome; the risk of escape must needs be great, whilst the living room in the Castle

was ever scanty. But to have your foe secure, buried alive, under your feet, producible on the instant as long as his miserable life dragged out, was a pleasant and soothing idea to the savage old-time Scots.

Spite of all difficulties, the annals of the fortress record many remarkable escapes. The French prisoners, or some of them, in 1761, and again in 1811, made desperate efforts to get away. R. L. S. models his story after the 1811 attempt, in which the captives cut a hole in the lower part of the parapet, at a place called the Devil's Elbow. Mr. Neil Munro traces the source to a translation published in *Chambers' Miscellany* of the record of a French captive in Edinburgh Castle. Many of the incidents are the same. Thence they descended by a rope. One fell two hundred feet down the rock, and was smashed to pieces; the others sped westward by the Glasgow road, but were speedily retaken. This is substantially the history of the mass of French prisoners in *St. Ives*. Special mention is made, as you might expect, of the Devil's Elbow. There was one curious case between the dates mentioned. An English episcopal clergyman, minister of the Cowgate Chapel, was tried for abetting four French prisoners in their escape from the Castle. After they got out he concealed them in his own house until he could get them over to Inchkeith, the island in the Firth of Forth outside Leith. He seems to have continued his help until they got away altogether.

R. L. S. was careful about points of detail. If

he distorts the facts, it is not from carelessness, but from what seemed to him sufficient artistic motives. At first he supposed the prisoners were dressed anyhow, were unshaven and unshorn, an unkempt crew of ruffians. Presently he discovers they were tricked out in a "grotesque livery" of yellow, and under the barber's hands twice a week. Though loath to alter his draft, he did so when he found out his mistake. Yet it is hard not to make slips, for the history of the New Town is perplexing. To-day, it is some hundred and fifty years old. Those years were full of incessant change and development. St. Ives remarks on the view of Princes Street from the Castle, "a singularity in a military prison that it should command a view of the chief thoroughfare." The promenaders on it "entered and left the shops which are in that quarter, and for a town of the Britannic provinces particularly fine." This is true of to-day, but not of the years before Waterloo. There were one or two shops, but the street was mainly a residential street like Heriot Row, the houses being built after the same fashion with sunken areas, and steps up to the front door. Again, in his last chapter of *St. Ives* the author wrote: "I went down on the esplanade off Princes Street, walked and stood there, alone and conspicuous, looking across the garden at the old grey bastions of the fortress." But there was no garden in those days; the valley on the site of the Nor' Loch, save for the space taken up by the Mound, popularly known as "Geordie Boyd's mud brig," was a waste howling

wilderness, a receptacle for all sorts of rubbish. In chapter xxv., St. Ives again re-enters Edinburgh, where he lodged in St. James's Square. This is near the Register House, and both were built on Mouters Hill, as R. L. S. spells it in *Catriona*. The popular name was Bunker's Hill. The building of the Square was just beginning when two builders engaged thereon had an angry dispute culminating in a battle royal, wherein they pummeled one another lustily, to the delight of a huge mob of spectators. News of the battle of Bunker's Hill reached the town that same day, and the scene of the local battle was forthwith dubbed Bunker's Hill, under which name it is mentioned in the trial of Deacon Brodie, 1788. Robert Burns lived here in 1787, during his visit to Edinburgh. There are many little touches recalling Edinburgh at the time; thus Dalmahoy, the convivial citizen with whom St. Ives "foregathers" in St. Andrew Square, suggests "a chop and a bottle in Dumbreck's Hotel." This was a well-known hotel of that and an earlier day situate in the Square.

The last six chapters are contributed by Sir Quiller-Couch, but they are on the outlines sketched by R. L. S., and deserve a word. The Assembly ball was given at Buccleuch Place, a little off George Square. These Assemblies were marked and peculiar features of Old Edinburgh life. They were first held in the West Bow, then on the south side of the High Street, where you may still see the Old Assembly Close, but finally in George Street in the New Town. There were also Assembly

Rooms in Buccleuch Place, chosen because the escape to Swanston was less impossible from here than from George Street. The place was built between 1766 and 1780 as part of that extension on the South Side which at one time seemed like to outrival the New Town across the valley. According to Lord Cockburn, in those beautiful rooms were to be seen the last remains of the stately ball-room discipline of the preceding age.

Weir of Hermiston is placed in the same period as *St. Ives*. It is much concerned with Edinburgh and legal life therein. Competent critics consider this brilliant fragment the best thing its author ever did. They have not explained, however, the reason of this, which is sufficiently obvious. He was writing in the full maturity of his power on all his favourite subjects. The Covenanting note appears in Mrs. Weir and her history. Again, he set forth Edinburgh and the life in it of a young man; such as he was himself in the University and the Parliament House. Also he drew on his knowledge, which was considerable, of the trappings and furnishings of Scots law, if not of Scots law itself. Adam Weir, the Lord Justice-Clerk with the paper title of Lord Hermiston, according to the fashion of the Senators of the College of Justice, is professedly a realization of the character as Stevenson conceived it of Lord Braxfield. In *Some Portraits by Raeburn* Stevenson dwells on the figure in a sort of fascinated way. Braxfield, though coarse, narrow, uncultured, was a man of strong will and great powers. He knew his book of Scots law very

well indeed, and he also knew all that was evil in human nature. He was not cruel or vicious, but merciless, steady as a rock; a man of pithy, vigorous expression, his Scots had a deadly force. Ramsay of Ochtertyre compared it with the Scots of Robert Burns. He died in the last year of the eighteenth century, when Scots was not so much of a dead tongue as it is to-day. It was spoken among the better classes as R. L. S. wrote it, for he harked back to the classic models of an earlier time. Braxfield as Lord Justice-Clerk presided over the Court of Justiciary, the Supreme Criminal Court of Scotland. It was a troubled time: the lower classes were restless, discontented with their lot, demanding more freedom and better conditions of life; the higher were alarmed and disturbed. Braxfield presided over the "sedition trials," as they were called, and administered what he believed to be justice to the political martyrs entirely in the interests of the ruling classes. Stevenson's portrait follows the original very closely, though he makes it a shade nobler figure than he was in reality. Oddly enough, the date of this story is made 1814. From the wild nature of the action, it had been better to antedate rather than postdate. Some later episodes which as fate decreed were never written must have determined the years.

Of the Edinburgh places mentioned the first is George Square, which is some half-mile walk south of the Parliament House. Here Braxfield went to reside about or before 1784; previous to that he had occupied one of the flats in Covenant

Close, off the High Street. Even for to-day the houses in George Square are spacious, then the change from the narrow ways of the Close must have seemed remarkable. The Square was built about 1765. Scots peers, Lords of Session, and other distinguished people were early tenants. Number 25 is memorable as the home of the Scott family between 1776 and 1797, Walter's father having removed there from the College Wynd in the former year. George Square is still eminently respectable, if not genteel. For some occult reason it is to-day particularly affected by dentists. The home-life of young Weir was passed in this Square. "A cad from the Potterrow once struck him in the mouth, he struck back, the pair fought it out in the back stable lane towards the Meadows." This reads like an echo of Scott, who describes the fights between the High School boys such as himself and the cads of the neighbourhood. "Cad" simply means vulgar little boy, and appears to be abbreviated from caddie, the class that performed many important though more or less servile offices in Old Edinburgh. The Potterrow was called a mean street in 1779, and it seems to have always been so during its long if ignoble life. One thing makes it memorable. In June 1567 in a house there was discovered the casket that held those famous letters, conclusive if genuine, of Mary Stuart's complicity in the Darnley murder. The Meadows are immediately behind George Square. They form a large open space, hemmed in now on every side by houses. At the time of the story they

were a fashionable promenade, wherein the ladies and big-wigs of Old Edinburgh took their walks abroad.

"Archie went the usual round of Edinburgh boys, the High School and the College." The High School, you will remember, was the old building where is now the Old Infirmary, to the east of the College. At College, Archie was a member of the Speculative Society, but of that I have already said enough. The trial and execution of Duncan Jopp is a turning-point in the narrative. The Justiciary Court was then and still is in the Parliament House buildings. After hearing the sentence, young Weir goes out into and down the High Street. "He saw Holyrood in a dream, remembrance of its romance awoke in him and faded. He had a vision of the old radiant stories of Queen Mary and Prince Charlie, of the hooded stag, the splendour and crime, the velvet and bright iron of the past and dismissed them with a cry of pain." Here is one of the few references R. L. S. makes to Holyrood and its memorable story. The hooded stag is the beast that, according to legend, attacked David I as he was hunting in the forest on the spot on Holy Rood Day 1128. In gratitude for the miraculous preservation of his life he founded Holyrood Abbey. Archie "lay and moaned in the Hunter's Bog." This is, or rather was, ere the days of rifle practice, a secluded valley in the King's Park, a favourite place for quiet meditation to disturbed minds. The hanging of Jopp is pictured without local detail, but at that time the Tolbooth was still standing;

the roof of the western portion of it was the place of execution. Next day Weir has "a chance encounter with the celebrated Doctor Gregory," who gave him some good advice. James Gregory (1753–1821). Professor of Medicine in the University and the best known member of a famous family, was one of the chief physicians in his time in Edinburgh. He is still remembered, gratefully it is to be hoped, if not pleasantly, as the author and first compounder of "Gregory's mixture." Following on this Archie has an explanation with his father, whereupon the scene of the story shifts from the capital to Hermiston.

The Body-Snatcher is not one of the best stories of our author. It is excluded from the Edinburgh edition, and R. L. S. "would not take the full payment which had been bargained for." It was the Christmas Number of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and achieved some notoriety from the gruesome method of advertisement adopted, a method it was said suppressed by the police, yet it has powerful passages. The incidents are taken from the resurrection period in Edinburgh that culminated in the Burke and Hare murders in 1827. Some of the characters are historical. The extra-mural teacher of anatomy "whom I shall here designate under the letter K." is obviously Dr. Robert Knox (1791–1862), the anatomist; Jane Galbraith is "handsome Mary Patterson"; and the central episode of the story, where Gray after being cut in pieces on the dissecting-table is dug out of a grave in a country churchyard, is adapted from a legend of the time, which

tells of two medicals abstracting a woman's body from Glencorse. The body seems to come to life again, whereat the resurrectionists desert their prey and flee with frantic yells of terror. In the story the horse dashes away with the gig containing the deserted body. The artistic fault of the R. L. S. version is that it ends in an impossibility of which no explanation, natural or supernatural, is suggested. Truth is not merely stranger but more gruesome than fiction. In the actual narrative the husband of the dead woman finds the body deserted on the roadside early next morning. At first he thought it a case of premature burial, and made frantic efforts to restore consciousness. Only when he saw how hopeless was his task did he suspect what had really happened.

The works I have considered treat of the Edinburgh of the past. The *Misadventures of John Nicholson* deals with the city of Stevenson's youth. It is not of his best, nay, it was only after some hesitation placed among his collected works. The hero is a muff, the heroine does not convince. The cabman, however, is droll and lifelike, a gem of his kind; you might have taken him off the rank at Princes Street. The story was written in 1887, a potboiler or "machine," as the author would have said. It served for the Christmas Number of *Yuletide*, an annual of the house of Cassell. R. L. S. scarcely refers to it, was perhaps a little ashamed of it and that for various reasons. It is intensely local, and I for one should be sorry to miss it; for it gives pictures not to be had elsewhere of phases of

Edinburgh life, recent yet quite vanished. It is not likely that readers out of Scotland will understand all its hits. Have they heard of Candlish and Begg and Lee, for instance?

The first two were ministers of the Free Church, which at the Disruption of 1843 broke away from the Establishment, and "Disruption principles" expressed their stricter views. Dr. Candlish was for many years the leader of his sect. Dr. Begg was of the Irreconcileables. In *Embro Hie Kirk*, one of the Scots poems in *Underwoods*, this divine is introduced suggesting the destruction of the painted windows of St. Giles'. Dr. Robert Lee was a minister of the Church of Scotland, and incumbent of Old Greyfriars, into which he introduced a service-book and a ritual. He and all his works were anathema to the men of the old school, and heated and bitter discussions and proceedings in the Church Courts ensued anent his innovations, though the controversy is dead enough to-day. Randolph Crescent, the home of the Nicholsons, is a little to the south-west of Heriot Row, and its houses are of the same class. "Here at least was a citadel unassailable by right-hand defections or left-hand extremes." Douce Davie Deans in *The Heart of Midlothian* has a phrase like this. It is a Covenanting catchword, archaic at the date of the story. John forgets to lodge £400 in the British Linen Company's Bank in St. Andrew Square, and of this money he is afterwards robbed on the Calton Hill. To assist his friend Alan Houston he had already pawned his watch as "John Frogs, 85 Pleasance."

This Pleasance is a piece of Old Edinburgh. It is a street continuing St. Mary Street towards the south. It lay just outside the Flodden Wall. Here of old was a convent of St. Mary of Placentia, corrupted into Pleasance, also called for some unexplained reason Dearenough. It is one of the lower quarters of the town. His friend Alan makes an appointment with him in the house of one Collette. "Collette was simply an unlicensed publican who gave suppers after eleven at night, the Edinburgh hour of closing." The mention of this place recalls a curious chapter in municipal history. In the seventies the Licensing Laws were administered in Edinburgh with considerable laxity. The hotels were often kept open till twelve or later. There was no difficulty in obtaining liquor on Sunday, when the houses were supposed to be closed to all but travellers. Dotted over the town were various unlicensed houses called shebeens, where drink was sold all night through. Of these, Collette's was the most famous. There were wild rumours about the proprietor. He was reported a member of Cambridge University, and some averred a barrister-at-law, though what he was doing in that galley no one ever explained. I have seen its like and can say that the picture of dirt and discomfort is not exaggerated. The site as here given is in an obscure lane "whose tail descends into the sunless slums of the Low Calton." On the night of John's presence the house is raided; the whole company are marched off to the police office and bound over to appear next day. Now the police in a town of

the moderate dimensions of Edinburgh were well aware of the existence of this and other shebeens. They raided them from time to time, no doubt could have suppressed them had they wished, perhaps minor officials were bribed, whilst their superiors looked upon such places as safety-valves. However, dens like this, and even of a less reputable sort, were not hard to come upon in the Edinburgh of the period. The nightly scenes in Princes Street and the adjacent places now seem incredible. They were commented on by strangers, and pointed contrasts were drawn between Edinburgh Saturday nights and Edinburgh Sunday mornings, it being preposterously assumed that the wild reveller of Saturday and the staid churchgoer of Sunday was one and the same person. This was to visit the sins of John Nicholson on the head of his respectable parent. The picture R. L. S. gives us of the seamy side shows nothing of the "raptures and roses of vice." It is all sordid and mean. However, the better part of half a century has gone by and all has suffered change. Edinburgh if less theologically devout than of yore is more decent and orderly. The law is rigidly observed, public-houses close at ten, and Princes Street is swept and garnished.

The little party emerge from the police office in the Old Fishmarket Close, they consult under the buttresses of St. Giles', which is just opposite, and then go to North Castle Street, memorable as the home of Scott for thirty-six happy and crowded years. Opposite the Castle, whence its name, it runs north of Princes Street. References to places

familiar to R. L. S. crowd the little story. Queensferry Street, at the West End, is the beginning of Queensferry Road; the near St. George's Church is a huge classic edifice in Charlotte Square, which John observes with emotion after a ten years' absence in San Francisco. He sees the railings on which he "rattled his clackan," a wooden club then in favour with the Edinburgh schoolboy. He visits Houston at the Regent Terrace, a set of substantial, imposing houses on the Calton Hill. He meets a friend at the corner of Pitt Street, and remembers how in his company he had broken a window in India Place down towards the Water of Leith, and climbed the Castle Rock, a favourite feat for centuries of the Edinburgh schoolboy. The course of the story takes him to Murrayfield, where the Lodge is the theatre of the chief action of the piece. The Lodge has been identified as the home of his friend Mr. Baildon, though much altered. Murrayfield, now an outlying suburb on the Corstorphine road, and on the continuation of Corstorphine Hill, is a place of good residential houses. It took its name from the family of Murray, whose most important member was the Scots Judge, Lord Henderland. From it "open fields stretch upward to the woods of Corstorphine Hill, or backward to the dales of Ravelston, or downwards to the valley of the Leith." Every year those open fields are more and more invaded by the builder, and the description of the rural surroundings of Murrayfield would now require modification, but you can still walk along Ravelston Dykes and view Ravelston

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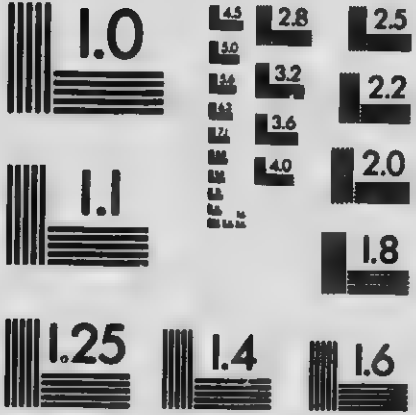

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House, once the seat of the Keiths, hereditary Marshals of Scotland, with its quaint gardens, on which Scott modelled those of Tullyveolan. R. L. S. mentions the height of the garden walls. The manner in which, especially in the older suburbs, the houses are enclosed by those stone walls is a curious feature of Scots suburban districts. Apparently it was imitated from the French, for you find the same thing in the older suburbs of Paris, and in many of the French towns. This hints of a disturbed state of things, when each house was guarded. The absence of those walls in England points to centuries of peace and order.

Returning from Murrayfield, he meets his cabman in front of Donaldson's Hospital. This is a beautiful Tudor building, founded about the middle of the last century by James Donaldson, formerly a printer at the foot of the West Bow, for the education of poor children. It is one of many in Edinburgh, of which George Heriot's is the most famous. Other localities are the Craigleith Quarry, where John conceals himself. From here great part of the stone was taken to build New Edinburgh. Everything is cleared up in the end. The author of the murder proves insane and is removed to Morningside Asylum, which has long been the Bedlam of Edinburgh. Some consider Nicholson senior drawn from Thomas Stevenson. He is rather the heavy father of the comedy of genteel Edinburgh life as R. L. S. observed it. Whatever be its faults, the story has the true feel of the Edinburgh of the seventies.

As companion picture and contrast to John

Nicholson, the fast young man, you have the correct Edinburgh youth set before you in the Francis Scrymgeour of *The New Arabian Nights*. He is Clerk in the Bank of Scotland, presumably in the head office in Bank Street. It is a conspicuous building on the south side of East Princes Street Gardens, stuck on a high part of the ridge; for, unlike the other banking corporations of Edinburgh, the Bank of Scotland, faithful to old traditions, has still its head-quarters in the Old Town. A portrait of the correct youth is drawn with a certain droll irony, in words of mock praise. His conventional goodness is only skin deep. At his interview with the Writer to the Signet (the highest class of Scots solicitor) he is directed to go to the Comédie Française on Sunday the 15th. "'I should certainly have preferred a week-day,' replied Francis, 'but, after all, once in a way——' 'And in Paris, my dear sir,' added the lawyer soothingly; 'I believe I am something of a precisian myself, but upon such a consideration I should not hesitate an instant.' And the pair laughed pleasantly together." The usual Scots view of Sabbath observance, and the tacit assumption that, like the old Scots Fast Day, it is only a question of latitude, have never been put more neatly. His other views suffer a sudden change. "The flat in Scotland Street looked mean in his eyes, his nostril for the first time rebelled against the odour of broth." Scotland Street is a little to the north-east of Heriot Row, but it is not a street of the same class, since the houses are divided into flats, and not self-contained. In the Old Town in

the old days practically everybody lived in flats, as is still so frequent in France and Germany, but in the New Town and the suburbs better-class people came to occupy houses of their own. There was, by the way, in Scotland Street a railway tunnel, now long disused. R. L. S. as a lad took a quite romantic view of this tunnel, possibly the memory of it led him to use the name of the street.

I must refer to one other passage where R. L. S. does not give the name of the locality In *The Wrecker* Loudon Dodd is taken by his grandfather to a cemetery, "by some strange chance immured within the bulwarks of a prison, standing besides on the margin of a cliff crowded with elderly stone memorials." This is the Old Calton burying-ground, on the lower slopes of the Calton Hill. The prison is the Calton Jail, a huge castellated structure begun in 1815 and opened in 1817 as successor to the Tolbooth, or Heart of Midlothian, in the High Street. After a century of existence it is about to be removed to make way for Government offices. The cemetery was there long before. It is the one referred to in the brilliant essay entitled *Old Mortality*. The grandfather is a Scots jerry-builder amusingly portrayed. With him he visits the lions of the city, touched off in a brilliant paragraph, and also the "doleful suburbs." "I have rarely seen a more shocking exhibition; the bricks seemed to be blushing in the walls, and the slates on the roof to have turned pale with shame." In the chapter on the villa quarters in the *Picturesque Notes* R. L. S. had already poured forth the vials of his wrath on

those new additions, on those wens and pimples as he considered them on the city he loved so well. The villa quarters are much increased since his day. They cover the plain, they crest ridge after ridge of the Braid Hills, they obliterate one historic spot after another. You understand his rage, and yet may find it exaggerated. Compared with the tumbledown brick of many a London suburb, the stone villa of modern Edinburgh seems fairly solid.

CHAPTER V

THE PENTLANDS IN STEVENSON'S LIFE

THE Pentlands are peculiarly the R. L. S. country. Swanston Cottage is there, and so is Colinton, and after Edinburgh they are the two spots in Scotland that he knew best. There he spent his most impressionable years, and the scenery of this hill district was used by him again and again in his writings. Not that he went far afield even within the circuit of those hills. A name impressed him, so he used it: that does not mean that he ever trod the particular way. Thus I doubt if he even crossed the Cauldstane Slap which in the last days of his life he was to make the scene of some of his most moving passages. He knew well the shady corners of Glencorse. The Hunter's Tryst, the Fisher's Tryst, the Buckstone, are all within the bounds of the places mentioned. He tells us, in his *Gossip on a Novel of Dumas*, how he roamed about the near heights, and in the evening read the *Vicomte de Bragelonne*, that huge (there are six volumes) hotchpot of exciting adventures which forms the concluding number of the *Trois Mousquetaires* series. He was thus acquainted with the prominent characteristics of the range.

The Pentland Hills begin about three miles south-

west of Edinburgh, they go on for sixteen miles south-westward; they are not a continuous chain or ridge, but are broken or crossed by a great variety of passes. They are soft, rounded, friendly hills, here covered with heather, again green with grass. A variety of villages are on the lower slopes. There are numerous farm-steadings or "touns," in the old Scots phrase, and as all these in one way or other depend on Edinburgh, the connection of the hills with the town is peculiarly intimate. If these depend on Edinburgh in one way, Edinburgh depends on them in another. There are numerous burns and lochs. A little judicious damming, and a small loch becomes greater, or one is created out of a burn; from them the water supply of Edinburgh is derived. If you look at a map of the district, you find reservoirs and compensation ponds in abundance. The peculiar name of the latter is thus explained. If you interfere with a natural supply of water to divert it in a particular direction, you deprive certain tracts of what nature gave them, you cannot always do this with impunity. The compensation pond restores the balance, helps judiciously to equalize for the benefit of the folk that dwell there the supply of a common necessary. As Hugh Miller said, the name is misleading. The reservoirs are mostly beautiful lochs, with all the wild natural charm that you associate with the very name. They are here exactly as you see them in the Highlands. The Glencorse Reservoir and the North Esk Reservoir are cases in point.

The Pentlands are beautiful in every point of

view. From the Castle you see them from a height. You get in one sweep many important summits, gather at a glance the nature of the range. Still more charming is the prospect from Corstorphine road, that is between them and the sea. This is a low level, so thus you look up, first at the townlets on the lower slopes, then on the fields and woods and farms that are above and around them, and finally on the summits with their exquisite contours. From the hills themselves you have far-reaching views of the Lothian plain, of the waters of the Firth, and the hills of Fife beyond. On the southern slope, where the land falls away towards the border, you have another set. From the summit of the passes you see around you a very sea of hills, and there is nothing but hills, for all trace of human presence has for the time disappeared. It is this last element that gives the Pentlands their rarest charm. The passes are peculiarly solitary. If you leave the last farm-house on the south side, you go some five or six miles up through one of the passes and down again before y a reach a farm-house on the other. Often you will not meet a human being. Though there is a right of way through the passes, there is sometimes no way at all. Here is my own experience in two cases. The first was crossing from the south from Balerno up by Redford across the Threipmuir Reservoir, then along a beautiful avenue of trees, "the gateway of the Pentlands," and past Bavelaw Castle and so on, skirting the Kitchen Moss, ever upward. The legends of the countryside are numerous. This

about Threipmuir may be told for illustration, as the least likely and most complicated of the lot. St. Clair of Roslyn excited the jealousy of King Robert the Bruce by his extravagant hunting tales, wherein his two dogs Hold and Fast were credited with marvellous power. They would race down anything, in fact he would lay his head on't. King Robert accepted the stake. Perhaps he thought the head of little importance, a fit subject for a trifling wager. A white hart of wondrous speed was hunted by the dogs. An they pulled it not down ere the burn was reached, off went the head. The St. Clair *threeped* or urged on the dogs with such force and skill that they had their fangs in the haunches of the quarry just in time. The victor had the forest of Pentland as a gift for his daring. He piously ascribed his success to the aid of St. Katherine, whom he had invoked in his hour of need, vowing a chapel in her honour, which he presently erected at Glencorse. As the place is called Threipmuir to this day, and as the ruins of the chapel are still to be seen, or rather would be seen if you drained off Glencorse Reservoir, how can you doubt the truth of either legend? And Bavelaw Castle itself, of which not a stone remains, was a hunting seat of the old Scots kings. You have evidence of the chase.

I toiled onwards and upwards, and presently entered a cuplike depression many miles in circumference. Here the loneliness of the way fell upon me. The path was a thin track through the heather. There were sheep feeding on the hill-side. I pro-

ceeded for an hour or more in solitude and stillness —nothing but the heather in front and the edge of the cup—

> Like one that on a lonesome road
> Doth walk in fear and dread.

It was an eerie feeling. I could not help turning round every minute or two, but behind was as solitary as before. In the very depth of the cup ran a burn of dark, gloomy water. It was dyed by the heather that grew over it. There was the midday halt. It is only under such conditions that you know how delightfully the plainest food tastes, how divinely the sip of usquebaugh drinks. In such solitudes, though amid wilder scenes, Prince Charles after Culloden is said to have acquired a taste for liquor that lasted him through life. The wine of the country goes so well with the water of the country! I crept on between the West Kip Hill and Gap Law. I was close to Ninemileburn, on the road between Carlops and Edinburgh, on the south of the range, before I met anyone.

Another day I was at the Cauldstane Slap. This is the most famous of all the passes. It runs between Mid Calder and West Linton, a distance of fourteen miles. Approaching from the north side, you go along the old Lanark road till you reach the edge of a dismal stretch called the Cauld Whang. Here is the Little Vantage Inn, once well known to the old-time drovers, who did not fail to bait man and beast ere they attacked the pass. A grim, odd, cynical name for a house of call! But it is of no advantage to anybody nowadays, for its hearthstone

is long cold, and its black and tottering walls would not shelter you against weather. The pass, lofty and exposed, runs between the East Cairn and West Cairn Hills. At the beginning of the ascent you cross the Water of Leith, here a moderate burn save in time of flood, and then you must flounder through the heather as best you may, for there is no path at all. There are some guide-posts whereby you steer your course. Yet in one sense the way is clear enough. As you look up from the lower road at any of those cross-ways you see the hills, as they approach one another, dip down, so to speak, and where they dip lowest that is the pass. But if you go straight at it you founder in bogs, are impeded by burns and hindered by hillocks, so that the circuitous route from post to post is best. It is a stiff climb, and the summit of the pass is wild enough, strewn with huge boulders, surrounded by mighty hills, cold and chill. A slap is properly a gateless opening in a dyke, but here the hills are the dyke and the name is by analogy.

When you visit a place in the chance way I did, it does not always reveal its historic character. It was a mild autumn day, and the wind blew with little force; far off I had noted a human figure perched on a boulder on the summit. This turned out to be a placed minister of the National Church, though where was his parish I cannot tell, for he was correct and stiff, and a little offended at the offhand way in which I saluted a fellow-wayfarer. He took himself off presently, and I saw him no more then or afterwards. A gipsy or a drover had been much more

in keeping, for this was once a great drive-road, and along this in the old days "bestial" were driven southward for the English market. At a still earlier date the pass was known to the wild free-booters of the border, the Scotts and Armstrongs and Liddels and Elliotts and so forth, who thus drove towards their border fortresses the cattle they had lifted on the slopes of the Pentlands. Some of those raids from the damage and ruin they caused were historical. Those in 1582 and 1600 may be mentioned. Then came the union of the Crowns, and the borders were speedily quieted by the strong hand.

It is quiet enough to-day, but you think of those wild nights of yore, the farm-house burning in the distance, the heather and the rocks glimmering in the light of torches, the leaps and bellowing of the frightened cattle as they drove onward, the yells of men in hot strife, the ground dyed with blood!

It is made a reproach to the city folk that they do not seek those solitudes oftener and in greater numbers, but the modern love for mountain scenery easily yields before real difficulty, and here there is no train or coach, you must tramp it. In the drove-days the passes were not so solitary. And again, since the town is so populous, more folk are afoot there than in the sixties and seventies when R. L. S. knew them. I have given a specimen of the Pentland legends. They are of all sorts, Covenanting, supernatural, romantic. The very name has its charm, for Pentland means Pict-land, and though I do not profess to know who the Picts were,

yet they were surely old and mysterious. History too was here made, for on Turnhouse Hill on the east side was fought the battle of Rullion Green on 28th November 1666, and the long trenchlike marks which you see looking up from the Edinburgh road that runs out from Morningside are said to show the graves into which the dead were thrown pell-mell.

Many writers touched the Pentlands before R. L. S., and some of them were near his peculiar ground. Lord Cockburn, the Scots Judge, lived at Bonaly, and built himself there an almost feudal town on the northern slopes of the hills in the parish of Colinton. One summer he tells us, he sat day after day in a favourite nook, and read every word of Tacitus. How the gloomy words of the greatest of the Latins tasted among those quiet hills he has not told us. Scott too has written, "I think I never saw anything more beautiful than the ridge of Cairnethy against a clear, frosty sky with its peaks and varied slopes. The hills glowed like purple amethysts, the sky glowed topaz and vermilion colours. I never saw a finer screen than Pentland considering that it is neither rocky nor highly elevated." Such are the Pentlands, such their memories.

As to particular places, first must come Colinton, where R. L. S. was so much in the lifetime of his maternal grandfather. The Rev. Dr. Lewis Balfour ministered there 1823–1860. In the account of "The Manse" in *Memories and Portraits* he has told all that you will probably care to know

of this village. Here as in many other cases I can only add a few words of supplement. Though swollen of late, it is still a little place four miles south-west of Edinburgh. It has no history worth the telling. Steep hills and tree-clad braes slope down to the Water of Leith, in the bed of which there are great rocks forming a succession of cascades. The walks by the side of the stream are of peculiar charm; the river makes a fold enclosing manse and church, as also a hideous paper-mill. The manse is a delightful old house, fairly large, with fine grounds! The church bears the date of 1771, but it has been restored and partly re-edified at various times. Steep steps lead up from it to the houses on the hill-side, where is now the most important street. In the village shops postcards, books, trinkets referring to R. L. S. or his writings are very much in evidence. Villas crown every coign of vantage: they compass the place about, they appear on unlikely and as you might think unsuitable nooks, they are much of the fashion of those structures which R. L. S. cursed with such whole-hearted fervour in early years in *The Picturesque Notes*, later in *The Wrecker*.

Such things must be. Colinton is a pretty place near Edinburgh, Edinburgh expands, communication is easy, and why is not the cit. to spend his hours of ease from toil there as well as elsewhere? Why not indeed? But by one of fate's little ironies R. L. S. is himself partly the cause of a growth he detested. His fame is great in his birthplace. He has touched the place with magic wand,

so that its fields and woods and waters are wider and better known and seem more lovely. Letters like other trades has its rules and even tricks. If you praise a place you take it at its best, select its choicest spots of set purpose, rose-colour your picture. As your citizen balances the pros and cons of locality this literary feather, so to speak, may turn the wavering balance, and at last for Colinton he neglects Currie or Corstorphine.

The ardent Stevensonian may not find his pilgrimage to Colinton a source of pure joy, but he will console himself when he turns his steps south-eastward and makes for Swanston. The distance is about two miles as the crow flies, and about five miles from Edinburgh. Here R. L. S. himself is your best, indeed your only guide. The Cottage is a charming, old-fashioned, roomy house in a nook of the hills—

> Atween the muckle Pentland's knees
> Secure ye sit.

The slopes rise above it, and sink under it. It is set off with lawns and privet hedges. Behind it, a little to the west, are the few trim-kept houses that make up the hamlet, for it cannot be called village. Woods are round it, the trees climb some way up the hill, and spread out in the shape of the letter T. It is a conspicuous object from the lower slopes, as well as from Fairmilehead on the Edinburgh road. Numerous excursion coaches pass that way. It is one of the stock objects, and the conductors do not fail to call the attention of the flocks they are shepherding to this now famous place. They supplement with

entertaining though inaccurate details of the life and works of R. L. S. The Cottage is now in charge of a Lord of Session, the friend and correspondent of our author, as well as a careful student of what he has written. He has collected and preserved such relics as have come into his hands. The gates of the garden stand invitingly open, so that you may enter and take a modest survey without let or hindrance. Swanston Farm lies just below, but you cannot roam over the fields as you would, for every gate and post carries a stern warning not to trespass. Such warnings are not rare in that countryside. Is it that the lairds are specially tenacious of their rights, or the populace are possessed with a demon? Certain it is, that were it not for the Rights of Way Society with their presence and their posts, many paths had perished utterly in that long tract of years when men had ceased to tread them for profit and had not yet begun to walk for pleasure.

If you have come from Colinton you have passed the Hunter's Tryst on your way. From Swanston you come down till you join the cross-road, and a little way along it westward at another bend of the road is a cottage, with storm windows, a small garden in front, and rather extensive stabling at the side. It is now a dairy. Of old it supplied a more generous liquor. The hunter as he returned laden with spoil after his long day in the hills saw with peculiar satisfaction the red light that beamed from its little windows. Such is the old-time picture your fancy paints, for then the Hunter's

Tryst was sufficiently far from Edinburgh to make it a real country inn. Once it was a favourite walk; a battered stone post by the roadside states that here is five miles from the General Post Office, also that it was "erected to regulate the post-horse duties payable by hackney coaches 1814." The words seem the echo of a vanished world. To-day the suburbs of the capital are close at hand, and trains, bicycles, and motors—especially motors—have shattered our old ideas of distance.

Glencorse is a little way farther from Swanston than Colinton. You go south on the highway, then eastward through beautiful leafy lanes, and so to the church, which is a plain modern structure, no remarkable example of Presbyterian architecture. As you see there is no churchyard you suspect a mistake, and presently discover that you must retrace your steps a little to the northward, and there, just off the road, is the old church, the one referred to by R. L. S. It is dismantled and ruinous, ivy-clad, embowered in trees, and round it are low beautiful hills. The burn trickles in the hollow. The crowded churchyard is round it. You gather that the natives were long livers, for many inscriptions are in memory of folk above eighty. Glencorse is a parish, not a village, nor is it ancient, since it only dates from 1616, when it was compounded out of Pentland and Penicuik. If you follow the road that passes by both churches southward, you presently come upon the Fisher's Tryst, which is still an inn, no doubt because it stands on a broad highway, which your road has

just joined. It is quite an ordinary, unpretentious suburban inn, spite of its romantic name.

Those are the chief places in the Pentlands which bear on the life of R. L. S. Curious inquirers have interviewed the local rustics as to their impressions of the gifted youth. The result is disappointing, but quite in keeping with historic precedent. David Hume's mother thought her son "uncommon weak-minded." The fishwife encountering Adam Smith in the High Street promptly judged him a natural or idiot, though she admitted "weel putten on." With them must go the Swanston dame who summed up R. L. S. as "just naething," though she with wise caution added "when I kenn'd him." Another remembered how he doffed his hat whenever he passed her—sufficiently uncommon and at least characteristic. I wish, however, that someone had tapped John Todd and taken his impressions. Perhaps someone did, and was told in the words of Candlish about him that "the lad was grand company," and there was no more. After all, these and their kind would not understand or appreciate to-day. Later, when men of letters spoke words of commendation, it was with what seems to us now a misplaced air of patronage. The fairy prince was yet in disguise, later he was to take his rightful place on the throne.

CHAPTER VI

THE PENTLANDS IN STEVENSON'S WRITINGS

TWO of the novels are much concerned with the Pentlands. These are *St. Ives* and *Weir of Hermiston*. Of the first there is no doubt, for the actual places are named and frequently described. In Swanston Cottage Flora the heroine and Miss Gilchrist her aunt had their abode. In chapter v. Flora standing with the hero on the summit of the Castle Rock points it out in the distance. Chapter viii. is entitled "Swanston Cottage." St. Ives after his escape finds his way to it in the dawn without much difficulty. "The Cottage was a little quaint place" (in Stevenson's own time the house was altered and enlarged—this is a picture of its earlier state) "of many rough-cast gables and grey roofs. It had something of the air of a rambling infinitesimal cathedral; the body of it rising in the midst two stories high, with a steep-pitched roof, and sending out upon all hands (as it were chapter-houses, chapels, and transepts) one-storied and dwarfish projections. To add to this appearance it was grotesquely decorated with crockets and gargoyles ravished from some mediaeval church." After various alarums and excursions the aunt

arranges that he is to be put across the border by the two drovers Sims and Candlish (modelled after John Todd, the Swanston shepherd); to them she explains that he was a man "put to the horn" for debt. St. Ives thinks there is something barbarous and mediaeval in the sound, and is assured that it is only a process of Scots law. It is a curious term still used in old-fashioned legal documents in the North, but never actually performed. By an ancient legal fiction, a defaulting debtor was assumed a rebel to the King, and was declared an outlaw by blowing three blasts on the horn, whereupon he suffered all the penalties of outlawry.

The drovers and their cattle take a westward route. They rest on the top of Howden, which is a summit near Mid Calder, and that is the last definite indication we have. It is probably meant that they passed the Pentlands by the Cauldstane Slap, and they would then proceed by the Thieves' Road, which is a continuation of this last on towards the border. Its name suggests that others besides drovers passed that way—in old times the freebooters, and in later years the smuggler, the gipsy, and every "gangrel" body. At last, from a bare hill-side, he sees "the ribbon of the great north road." He joins it somewhere between Berwick and Newcastle, which latter is the first town he reaches. You observe he makes a considerable detour, for the Great North Road, starting from Edinburgh, passes through Haddington, Dunbar and Berwick, and so on to Newcastle, following pretty closely the line of the coast, though with considerable dives inland

to avoid circuity, and visit more or less important towns. In chapter xxvi., after St. Ives has again returned to Edinburgh, he visits the Cottage on a stormy night. On his way back, on the top of the first hill, "I spied a light on my left about a furlong away." He approaches it, and finds "a plain rustic cottage by the wayside of the sort called double, the signboard over the door, on it the inscription 'The Hunter's Tryst by Alexander Hendry.'" Here he finds a meeting of the Sixfoot Club, "an athletic society of young men in a good station, who made of the Hunter's Tryst a frequent resort," and here he remains for the night. This club was a reality; drinking and athletics were the amusements of those young giants, as they were those of the Norse divinities. And sometimes there was good talk, for Scott and Hogg were of their company, and where the Wizard of the North and the Ettrick Shepherd met in social converse things were said, you believe, well worth remembering. He returns to town next morning by Merchiston, where he meets Mr. Robbie, W.S. Merchiston might even then be counted a suburb of Edinburgh. It is a district that grew up round the old peel tower of the Napiers of Merchiston. Here the discoverer and inventor of Logarithms, still the best known member of a famous family, lived and worked. The continuation takes us again to the neighbourhood of Swanston, from whence St. Ives escapes in a balloon. Balloon ascents were favourite exhibitions of this and an earlier period.

I turn to *Weir of Hermiston*. I think substan-

tially the whole scenery is taken from the Pentlands. But the topography is of the most fantastic description; places are mixed up in the oddest way, and historic rivers are made to run as they do not run in fact. Wide as is the licence allowed to a writer of romance, if there be any bounds at all they are here exceeded. First as to the title name, it is taken, says Sir Sidney Colvin, "from a farm on the Water of Ale, between Ettrick and Teviotdale, and close to the proper country of the Elliots." I think this is not well founded. The Hermiston referred to is on the northern slope of the Pentlands. It is a village or hamlet or farm "toun" in Currie parish, Midlothian, close to the Union Canal. It is on the high road to Mid Calder, five and a half miles west of Edinburgh. It is anything but a "shore of old romance"; there is a row of quaint, thatched cottages, there is also a smithy, all which points are features of old Scots village-life, but to-day the road is studded with telegraph posts, heavily loaded with wires. Motor buses from Edinburgh and motor cars from everywhere crash through it with endless din, but those later features are since Stevenson's day. In the vicinity there is Hermiston House. It is a convenient distance from the capital, and those Pentland slopes, be it remembered, were favourite haunts of the Scots lawyers; moreover, it is the only place of any size in Scotland bearing that name. It is not a parish, and R. L. S. has, as we know, attached Glencorse Church to it, but that is also in the Pentlands though some distance away. The decisive point that clinches the matter to my mind

is that R. L. S. has used this very name in another of his tales. The bibulous cabman in *John Nicholson* recognizes the hero on the road to Murrayfield, which is also on the way to Hermiston, and declares, "I drove ye to Hermiston to a Christmas party." Glencorse is identified by the fact that Mr. Torrance the divine mentioned in *Weir of Hermiston* was actually the minister at Glencorse.

The scene of the most tragic moments of the story was meant to be the grave of the Praying Weaver of Balweary. It was "in the wild end of a moorland parish, far out of the sight of any house." There was a cairn among the heather, and near it a monument with some half-defaced verses. Balweary, I note, is a favourite imaginary parish of Stevenson. It is the parish of *Heathercat*, and also that of the Rev. Murdoch Soulis in the tragic history of *Thrawn Janet*. The nearest actual name to, and probably the origin of it, is Balwearie, a ruined tower in Fife, the abode of Sir Michael Scott, the Wizard of Dante's *Inferno* and Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. Even if the Wizard be vague and mythical, at any rate the Lairds of Balwearie were sung in old-time ballads, and the last of them cursed by John Knox in a particularly graphic passage. On the west of the Pentland range there is a Black Law and a Black Hill, each of which is practically the same name as the Black Fell of the story. On a wild and desolate part of Black Hill there is a solitary tombstone. Here, according to well-founded tradition, lie the remains of John Carphin. He fought with the Covenanting host at Rullion Green, was

grievously wounded, and fled after the defeat over the whole course of the Pentlands. He came at dead of night to the lonely farm of Adam Sanderson of Blackhill, a now ruined homestead; here he was kindly received, but died on the hill-side in Sanderson's arms. He had one last request, that his grave should lie within sight of his native Ayrshire hills. There is at the spot a gap in the heights, through which it is possible to see the hills of Ayrshire, which are some eighteen miles away in a straight line. The piety of the time marked the spot with a cairn. It has been noted that the Disruption of 1843 in the Scots Kirk revived the ideas of the Covenanting period. Here was an instance, for shortly after that event a tombstone was put up with an inscription. But the Praying Weaver of the tale was shot by Claverhouse with his own hand. Now in the story Crossmichael is given, apparently as the county town of Hermiston. Crossmichael is actually the name of a village and parish in the middle of Kirkcudbrightshire. It is on the river Dee, which there spreads out like a lake. In the graveyard of the parish church is a tombstone which bears "William Graham shot dead by a party of Claverhouse's troops for his adherence to Scotland's Reformation Covenant 1682." This is very similar to the fate of the Praying Weaver of Balweary, but the locality fits in much better with the slope of the Black Hill in the Pentlands. Crossmichael is identified by Sir Sidney Colvin with Peebles, because there is some trace of a convivial club in that abode of pleasure. This reminds of a

famous parallel between Macedon and Monmouth. There was a Hell Fire Club in London, and one in Dublin; also Wodrow in his *Analecta* tells us of one in Edinburgh in 1726. They did much business in their head-quarters with sulphurous flames and fumes. The tests of admission were profane and blasphemous. The good old divine lifts up his hands, as well he might, in holy horror. A pious peasantry were equally scandalized. There were feeble imitations in several of the provincial towns. The club in the story is a comparatively mild affair. What Scots borough of old was without one of the kind?

Among the minor characters mentioned are Hay of Romanes and Pringle of Drumano, which again is odd, since there is a Romanno House on the south-west slope of the Pentlands, which lends a piece to each name.

The clearest identification with the Pentlands is the Cauldstane Slap, where occurs the brilliant and savage episode of the death of black-avised Gilbert, who farmed the Cauldstane Slap. His assailants were "but little ahead, hot foot for Edinburgh, by way of the Pentland Hills." There is no farm of the name given which belongs solely to the pass, though there are plenty "touns" near at hand that might have served for model. More confusing is the reference to the one who was killed and carried down Tweed to be cast up in the end at Crossmichael Brigg. Wherever that was, it could not have been in Kirkcudbrightshire. Also the Hermiston Water is given as a tributary to the Spango, which in fact is one of the head-streams of Crawick Water. This

last is a tributary of the Nith, which finally runs into the Solway Firth. R. L. S. wisely preferred to take his scenery from personal experience. He knew the Pentlands better than any other hill-country in Scotland. It were absurd to suppose that he deliberately chose the Pentlands, and then needlessly disguised his choice as much as possible. But for the reasons given I think he had them mainly in his mind, and they fit in better than any other locality with the incidents of the tale. In regard to proper names he took what best pleased his ear.

I have sufficiently spoken of the impressions of the Pentlands given in "Pastoral" and other papers in *Memories and Portraits*. From first to last he was much concerned with these hills. His very earliest work was on the Pentland Rising, which ended at Rullion Green on the 28th November 1666. His essay is dated on the second centenary of the combat. It was not in itself a great battle. Though the year was Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*, he does not name it in his classic poem. Its chief interest for us to-day is its place in the literature of the Covenant. This was the cairn to which R. L. S. added his stone. His tract was published anonymously in 1866 by Mr. Elliot of Princes Street, Edinburgh. It is well written for a lad of sixteen, though it has none of the picked phrases and golden periods of his later years. The best passage is that which tells of the death of Master Andrew Murray, who was an "outed" minister living in the Potterrow. He was drawn to the window by the noise in the street, and saw beneath him the victori-

ous army marching on with such pomp as they could muster, dragging their prisoners behind them in the manner of a Roman triumph. The sight was too much for the old man. He fell mortally ill, and died within the next few days. Three hundred copies of this little pamphlet were published anonymously. It is but twenty-two pages. His father bought up all the copies. A stray one were now worth a considerable figure. The sentiment was strongly pro-Covenanting. In this as in some other matters the mind of the author worked in a circle. He came round at the end, in letters at any rate, to the thoughts and ideas at the beginning.

In treating of the Pentlands, however, in the *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh* he makes no mention of the Rising, though you would have guessed that the lonely grave of the Covenanter would have touched his quick fancy. But there was a profusion of material; also he dealt with the east not the western slopes, and the grave is on those western slopes. He treated only of things, so to speak, that were under his own hand: the ghost at the Hunter's Tryst, the beauty of Carketton, which rises straight above Swanston,—perhaps he agreed with Lord Cockburn that this was the most beautiful summit in Scotland,—and with the engaging exciseman of Fairmilehead and Lothianburn. If it be objected that Rullion Green itself was in the near neighbourhood, the answer is partly that it was a piece of history, and that his mature genius avoided a fair square important historical event.

In those notes he makes one curious mistake, trusting too much it may be to casual observation or ignorant gossip. It is about what he calls "General Kay's monument," a monolith standing in a field near the Hunter's Tryst. Now this is also called the Kel Stain or battle stone. It is also known as Camus Stane, "from the name of a Danish commander." This is on the right-hand side as you come from Edinburgh by the Morningside road, and is near the road from Fairmilehead to Hunter's Tryst; but also on the right-hand side, before you get as far as Fairmilehead, you pass what is called the Buckstone, a rock in the wall on the roadside, and it is said that the Clerks of Penicuik hold their land on the condition that the tenant for the time being shall blow three blasts of a horn from the top of this stone when the King shall come to hunt on the Burghmuir. Hence the motto of the family, "Free for a blast," and Sir Walter Scott's lines—

> From that fair dome where suit is paid
> By blast of bugle free.

Stevenson erroneously transfers all this to General Kay's monument.

Scattered through the four volumes of letters are numerous references to places in the Pentlands. I will only refer to two where Glencorse Church is mentioned. "It is a little cruciform place, with heavy cornices and string course to match, and a steep slate roof. The small kirkyard is full of old gravestones. One of a Frenchman from Dunkerque—I suppose he died prisoner in the military

prison hard by. . . . In church, old Mr. Torrence preached—over eighty, and a relic of times forgotten, with his black thread gloves and mild old foolish face." The letter is of June 1875 and is addressed to Mrs. Sitwell. The military prison referred to was an ancient mansion which Government had procured and fashioned into a hold for French prisoners of war. It was rather cramped, and in 1813, under the belief apparently that the war was to last for ever, our rulers set up a huge place, fit to hold six thousand captives and their keepers, secure and comfortable, at least from the keepers' point of view. It cost a hundred thousand pounds, and then fate played a humorous trick, for there was peace, whereupon all the captives were forthwith packed home. The prison suffered various changes as the years went by, finally becoming a huge military station. It is now known as Greenlaw or Glencorse Barracks. The minister referred to is obviously the original of the Mr. Torrance in *Weir of Hermiston*, though to get a better sound an *a* replaces an *e*—a significant proof of how minute points of style occupied the author's mind. He also would seem to be the original of the divine in the *Lowden Sabbath Morn*. He and his father before him occupied the living of Glencorse, to which he was presented by Tytler of Woodhouselee, the "haunted Woodhouselee" of Scott's ballad. It is recorded that he enriched that family, whose "seat is near at hand, with a watch, once the property of Queen Mary." It was a gift from the Dauphin of France to Mary before he espoused her, and it was

" given by her to her French attendant Massie on the eve of her execution." The particularity in the history of such relics is astounding, though possibly you are still sceptical. Mr. Torrence takes his well-earned rest in Glencorse Churchyard, where there is a stone to his memory, preserved more widely, however, by Stevenson's kindly though not altogether respectful reference. Nearly twenty years afterwards, in a letter to Mr. Crockett, 17th May 1893, he recurs again to the place, " I shall never take that walk by the Fisher's Tryst and Glencorse"; and again, " Do you know where the road crosses the burn under Glencorse Church? Go there, and say a prayer for me: *moriturus salutat*. See that it's a sunny day; I would like it to be a Sunday, but that's not possible in the premises; and stand on the right-hand bank just where the road goes down into the water, and shut your eyes, and if I don't appear to you! well, it can't be helped, and will be extremely funny." How clear the place pictured itself on his memory after all the intervening years!

CHAPTER VII

ABOUT THE LOTHIANS WITH R. L. S.

R. L. S. was familiar with the Lothian shore of the Firth of Forth. We hear a good deal of it in his books. First there is Queensferry. The town itself is of little importance, less so now than in earlier years. Its name of Queensferry, or *Passagium Reginæ*, is as old as the twelfth century. It derives from the Queen, St. Margaret, wife of Malcolm Canmore, who passed that way again and again between Edinburgh and Dunfermline. Her last journey was in the drear winter of 1093, when the boat bore her dead body to Dunfermline for burial. North Queensferry is exactly opposite, on the Fife coast, and for centuries nearly all who have gone to Fife from the South have gone this royal way. The Queen no doubt followed the example of still earlier travellers, for nature has marked out the place as most convenient for crossing. "Just then we came to the top of the hill and looked down upon the Ferry and the Hope," so David Balfour in *Kidnapped*. A railway station now crowns the hill; "the Hope" is St. Margaret's Hope, an anchorage where the ancient fleet that in 1068 brought Margaret and her brother Edgar the Atheling, fugitives to Scotland, safely rode out the

storm. The noble youth has also left his memory in Port Edgar, a little haven to the west of Queensferry. Here is wealth of picturesque and charming names. "The islet with some ruins," which David notes in the midst of the narrows, is Inchgarvie. The ruins date from the time of James IV. It was a State prison till the Bass was purchased in 1671. If possible, the earlier place must have been even more uncomfortable. The Americans who visit Queensferry in the track of Stevenson perhaps more than in that of Scott, may note with interest that after Paul Jones had frightened the capital, the Lothians, and the kingdom of Fife alike by his audacious cruise far up the Firth, Inchgarvie was fortified with four iron 24-pounders. This was in 1779, and as is the way in such matters, after the special danger was past. The islet is now the central support of the great Forth Bridge, which carries you up in the air over the track of the sainted Queen.

If you know your Scott, you remember that the Queensferry Fly, that ponderous old-time vehicle, conducts, in the first chapter of *The Antiquary*, Monkbarns and Lovell to the Hawes Inn at Queensferry. Both Scott and Stevenson describe with reasonable gusto the food and drink set before their heroes. But the Hawes Inn makes a more attractive appearance in the pages of the earlier writer, though David calls there both at the beginning and end of *Kidnapped*, and converses with the landlord, who gives vent in very excellent Scots to some very imprudent observations anent Uncle Ebenezer. The inn impressed R. L. S., for he had already in a

Gossip on Romance noted the call it made upon his fancy. "There it stands apart from the town, beside the pier, in a climate of its own, half inland, half marine—in front the ferry bubbling with the tide, and the guardship swinging to her anchor, behind the old garden with the trees." R. L. S. notes that the Americans seek it for the scene in *The Antiquary*. Some of his intimates thought himself conscious and conceited, but I do not think it ever occurred to him that anyone would seek it for *his* sake. He dwells on the suggestiveness of the place. He lived there in a perpetual flutter, as if something remarkable was about to happen, but it didn't—at least not in his time. "The man or the hour had not yet come, but some day I think a boat shall put off from the Queensferry fraught with a dear cargo." This essay was written in February 1882, and published in November in *Longman's Magazine*. Next year saw the beginning of the Forth Bridge. When the essay was republished in 1887 in *Memories and Portraits* he adds a note, "I have tried to launch the boat with my own hands in *Kidnapped*," but neither here nor anywhere else does he refer to the Bridge. Yet to one of a family of engineers, to one who had such an interest, albeit a literary interest, in the lighthouse and the harbour, this great Bridge whose story is one of the fairy tales of science must have been of note.

He has a brief account of Queensferry towards the end of *Kidnapped*: "The town hall not so fine I thought as that of Peebles, nor yet the streets so noble." It is hard to think of the word "noble"

in connection with a Queensferry street, even when a raw country lad is the speaker; but R. L. S. delighted in the ironical touch such an observation implied. What with the Bridge, and the railway, and the naval station of Rosyth on the opposite shore, the place is far other than it was in the Stevenson not-distant day. In the autumn of 1912 I bicycled there from Edinburgh one Sunday night. The broad and spacious highway was thick with a fortnight's dust, which an endless succession of motors, public and private, kept in perpetual motion. War fleets lay in the Forth, electric flashes lit up all the water, boats came to and went from the shore, which was crowded with nautical men of many sorts and their attendants. The bustling incident of the minute was supreme. The Hawes Inn, or Newhalls Hotel as it is more elegantly termed, hummed with life, Sabbath Day as it was. Its customers thronged it that evening for other than literary memories. I peered over the wall into the garden; it was dark and deserted, and retained an air of seclusion and mystery. The last motor was loading for Edinburgh, and it panted past as I toiled up the brae, and then the crescent moon rose over the tree-tops and the silence of the night fell on the suburban fields.

Near places are referred to in the story: Alan Breck "made but a poor meal in an alehouse near Dundas." This is the name of an old castle and hill two miles south-west of the Ferry. It was held for some centuries by a family of that name. David and Alan part at "Rest and be Thankful" on

Corstorphine Hill, still a favourite evening walk of the citizen. Hence they look down on Corstorphine bogs, which lay at the foot of the hill to the north. All this land was once a dreary swamp, but before the time of the story the mineral well there was of such account that a coach ran between the village and the city eight or nine times a day. The urban gourmet smacked his lips over a dish of Corstorphine cream, a choice compound for which the district was famous. Already it had some promise as the future garden of Edinburgh, though rows of villas are making inroads on the garden. But I must stick to the shore, and proceeding westward halt at Cramond.

This is a village on the Forth, five miles from Edinburgh, and about the same distance east of Queensferry. The river Almond there joins the Firth. A steep winding street leads you up to the level of the surrounding country, and on that level is a knot of houses and villas of very modern date. On the left hand of the steep street as you rise are Cramond Inn and Cramond Church, and in that inn took place the riotous proceedings of the University of Cramond set forth in *St. Ives*. Here Dalmahoy and his crew parodied University proceedings to the accompaniment of much eating and more drinking. The inn is a fair-sized, irregular building; plainly it has been enlarged more than once, but still passes well enough for the village inn of a former year. It is of some age, so you are sure our author had this very "howf" in his mind when he called up before him in the South Seas the aspects of this far-distant countryside. The church is not three hundred

years old, but its yard is crowded even more than common with old vaults and monuments. Much of the small wealth of old-time Scotland was lavished on such memorials. If you had the tiniest piece of ground you were So-and-so of So-and-so, and its name in common parlance became your name, thus you must have it on your tombstone.

All about Cramond are places of interest. A little over a mile up the river is Old Cramond Brig, where James V of amorous rather than pious memory had a famous love adventure. Stevenson in drawing the Cramond University gives you a true picture of Edinburgh pranks of the time. The proceedings of the Bonaly Friday Club, which flourished almost thirty years later, were, if more sober, at least equally ridiculous—nay, many an old-time Edinburgh citizen of good position and usually grave appearance outdid Dalmahoy in folly. Is there not the record of Councillor Pleydell with his High Jinks in *Guy Mannering*? In *St. Ives* the walk to Cramond is by way of Newhaven and the sea-beach—at first through pleasant country roads, and afterwards along a succession of bays of fairy-like prettiness. The miles between the New Town and the sea were not then filled up with houses, which on the coast to-day are well-nigh continuous. Newhaven, about a mile west of Leith, was for centuries a quaint village inhabited by fishermen. The fishwives with their picturesque attire are still seen on Edinburgh streets, incongruous spectacles in an age of motors and tramways, and those same tramways grind through Newhaven itself, so quaint houses and

quaint community are alike on the verge of extinction. Also Newhaven fish dinners are an untried joy to the young generation, and Newhaven must presently be quite beaten down to the monotonous level of its surroundings. In (strange contradiction!) an English fictional writer's work, Charles Reade's *Christie Johnstone* (1853), you have the place in its brave old days adequately set forth. Reade was not one of the writers who attracted R. L. S., whose own touch on Newhaven is slight.

I pass round the coast till I come to Prestonpans. Here Alan Breck insisted on dragging David to the field of the famous battle of 1745. He calls the battle Gladsmuir, which is a little village on what was then a wild moor, but is now highly cultivated land. Here to-day, as you go eastward, you reach at last the *dulcia arva*, for dingy suburbs and coal-pits have made horrid the beginning of the Great North Road from Edinburgh up to this point. But Gladsmuir is some miles west of the battlefield, which the Jacobites called after it from an old rhyme, "On Gladsmuir sall the battle be." At the fishing village of Cockenzie "they were building herring busses at Mrs. Caddal's," and you may note that Cockenzie House is, as it has long been, the seat of the Caddals, who own much land in the parish Then they are obliged to go inland, but they strike the shore presently on Gillane sands, not far westward of Dirleton. Here they view the quaint islands that dot the coast. Of these Fidra is the most notable, "a strange grey islet of two humps." There is a ruin on it. It is that of a small chapel.

There was once a Cistercian nunnery at North Berwick, and the nuns used to get them to this chapel once a year for purposes of devotion; no doubt but it must have made an agreeable break in the monotony of their lives. As the pair came near the island, " by some door or window of these ruins the sea peeped through like a man's eye." A characteristic touch!

Gillane, or Gullane as it is now spelt (its most ancient name was Golyn), was then a few houses, scarcely even a hamlet, and it was little more as long as R. L. S. knew it. Here was a ruined kirk, for the name of the parish was in 1612 changed to Dirleton, where is now the parish church. But of late years golf has made the place prosper exceedingly, for Gullane links are famous, thus hotels and shops and villas abound on that once barren hill-side. Alan gets clear, and David is captured and conveyed south of Berwick Law, and so avoids North Berwick, which was then a small fishing village, huddled in between the north side of the Law and the sea. He observes far off the old tower of a church among the trees. This was Whitekirk, once a great place for pilgrimages to the shrine of Our Lady of Whitekirk. Among the pilgrims was Æneas Silvius of the Piccolomini family. David is taken to the Bass Rock from Canty Bay, the little port under the ruin of Tantallon Castle.

Where much is changed, Tantallon and the Bass at any rate are not. Tantallon stands on the brow of a cliff looking towards the Bass. It is impossible to better Hugh Miller's graphic line of description:

"Three sides of wall-like rock, and one side of rock-like wall." A little way off it looks strong and complete, at hand you recognize it a crumbling shell. Only it crumbles ever so slowly. It was the haunt of the Red Douglas. You still see the bloody heart on the shield above the gateway, for thus is commemorated the legend of the family. It is a well-known story. The good Sir James, fulfilling the last wish of his master, carried the heart of the Bruce towards the Holy Land. In Spain he fell fighting with the Saracens, and in death his body still covered the precious heart, which was brought back to Scotland and buried at Dunfermline. I shall not attempt here to trace the history of this famous fortress or the Rock. As R. L. S. says in *The Lantern Bearers*, "The Bass in the eye of fancy still flew the colours of King James, and in the ear of fancy the arches of Tantallon still rang with horse-shoe iron and echoed to the commands of Bell-the-Cat." The Castle has its own place in letters. Gawin, Bishop of Dunkeld, son of this same Bell-the-Cat, was almost certainly born here. He turned Virgil into very elegant Scots verse of the period, with some additions of his own describing the seasons and so forth. In them you recognize his native Lothian fields that lay around. And not to mention minor lights, Scott has so "cracked up" the place in *Marmion* that everyone has heard of it. Thus the reference in *Catriona* is but a stone as it were added to a huge cairn. The flag of King James on the Bass flew long after the Revolution of 1688. It was not indeed till April 1694 that

the garrison capitulated, and the ensign of the old race disappeared for a time at any rate from Scotland.

R. L. S. knew the Bass well and was interested in its romantic history. "The sea was extremely little, but there went a hollow 'plowter' round the base of it." There are many such graphic touches. He describes the solan geese, the true and sometimes only inhabitants of the Rock. "The young are dainty eating," says David. So the folk of the period thought, but to-day you would not find them served up at any of the grand North Berwick hotels, though I am sure the sheep of the Rock are, if they can be procured, for they are produced under the best conditions. Harder to find a better *gigot du pré salé*. R. L. S. tells how the *Sea-horse* came close up under the Rock, and fired guns solely from curiosity to see the birds rise and make evolutions through the air. The author must have seen many an excursion steamer perform this not very remarkable feat.

The Bass has a long history. Its first known inhabitant was Baldred, a hermit who died on it as early as 756. He wrought many miracles, duly chronicled by monkish writers or handed down by tradition. The place was held by the Lauder family. It was bought in 1671 by the Government for £4000 and used as prison for the Covenanters. "The martyrs of the Bass" was a well-known term. Stevenson, in the interjected story *Tod Lapraik*, has a good deal to say about them. He drew largely from a book on the Bass Rock published in Edinburgh in 1848. It was written by five writers; among them, Hugh Miller and Doctor M'Crie,

"the learned and unreadable M'Crie," as R. L. S. rather cruelly calls him in the Preface to *Familiar Studies*. Patrick Walker, the pedlar and packman who so graphically told the life of Peden the Prophet, and Fraser of Brea who left a record of his own captivity, are his chief original sources. The Governor's bad ale, the tobacco pipes, the psalms of the martyrs in their damp and dismal dungeons, the girl who met with so fearful a doom, the repentant soldier are history or tradition, not fancy. But they are woven together with a skill which makes them choicer than their sources.

North Berwick might be called to-day the capital of golf-land, and even in Stevenson's youth, when the game had not assumed its engrossing proportions, the links were famous. Its newer quarters are after the pattern of the streets of the capital. Stevenson was often here. In *The Lantern Bearers* he records some impressions. The lanterns were tin and the sport a boyish one, yet the memories are mainly bitter. They are of a coast that seemed for ever bleak, and a boy suffering from an eternal chill; also he records local tragedies chronicled nowhere else. They assumed morbid proportions to his sick fancy, are touched off with quite gruesome effect. The great historical tragedy of the place is the story of the North Berwick witches, to which reference is made in *Catriona*, and that reference must here be sufficient, for the story is too long to tell. However, David escapes from the Bass, and is presently off for Inveraray, where we shall soon find ourselves.

CHAPTER VIII

HIGHLAND SCENE AND HIGHLAND STORY

R. L. S. had a good knowledge of the Highlands. He had been by himself or with his father on engineering trips and engineering business over much of Scotland. In 1870 he was for three weeks on the small island of Earraid to the west of Mull, and he had also lived in Speyside, Blair-Atholl, Strathpeffer, and the Braes of Balquhidder. One of his many projects never realized was a History of the Highlands. The information he gathered for this was useful for *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*, of which part deals with those regions. We have also the short story or novelette *The Merry Men*, and the brief essay *Memoirs of an Island* which treats of Earraid.

We follow in the track of David Balfour. First there is his voyage in the good (or shall we say bad ?) ship *Covenant* of Dysart. She is bound for America, and goes round by Shetland to avoid the dangerous currents of the Pentland Firth, for the seamanship is not of the best. The Pentland Firth is the most difficult passage on the seas about Britain. The tides race with terrific force at a speed of from six to twelve miles an hour. Also there are hazardous eddies from aquatic twistings and great masses of

submerged rocks. One of these is called "The Merry Men of Mey," a name which the reader will please keep in mind. Under certain conditions the sea rises up like a wall, and moves forward in what seems a solid mass. The brig gets safely right round, though she is beaten back as far as Cape Wrath, "that dread cape so fatal to mariners," as Sir Walter Scott wrote of it in 1814, before the time of the lighthouse, which dates from 1828. Among the Hebrides, they took Alan Breck on board, after sinking the boat that carried him. They contracted to land him at Linnhe Loch, so their proper course would have been through the narrows of the Sound of Mull. Captain Hoseason shyed at the Sound. The sea is sufficiently deep, but the strait way is surrounded by huge hills, wherefrom descend great blasts to trouble the waters, so with even a moderate tempest the chafing together of opposing tides in the narrow channel was perilous to the ships of the time. True enough, but you suspect R. L. S. steered the *Covenant* by the west of Tiree and round the south of Mull rather for purposes of literature than navigation. He wished to introduce his favourite islet of Earraid, whereon the brig is cast away. It is barren and unpopulated. When the Dhuheartach Lighthouse was in course of construction in 1871 the island had a temporary population of one hundred and twenty-two, among whom was R. L. S. himself.

Earraid is quite close to the Ross of Mull; a little way to the north-west is Iona, well known in history as the chosen abode of Columba, the missionary of

the West. It is described in a famous sentence of Dr. Johnson as "once the luminary of the Caledonian regions, whence savage clans and roving barbarians derived the benefits of knowledge and the blessings of religion." There is a Gaelic proverb that he who goes to Iona once will go thrice. (The sage put himself to considerable trouble to make *his* pilgrimage, for he was an elderly man, and the way was rough and little frequented.) But you do not see on Iona the church of Columba, as R. L. S. rather vaguely puts it, unless you mean only the site, because the cathedral was not begun till the twelfth century. David escapes drowning, passes through Mull, and over the ferry t Kinlochaline on the mainland. The castle here, at an earlier date, was beleaguered by Colkitto, known in history as the lieutenant of the Marquis of Montrose, and in English literature by a cursory and scoffing reference in a famous sonnet of Milton. Then he goes on his way through Morven, and is ferried over Loch Linnhe to Lettermore.

It is here he meets Colin Campbell of Glenure with a party, and whilst he is talking to him Campbell is shot by an assassin, seen at the time, but not at the time or ever after identified. This is the famous Appin murder. The incidents in the book are taken almost exactly from the records of the trial to be presently referred to, except that David Balfour was present in fiction but not in fact. In the fiction David is hunted by the soldiers and escapes by the help of Alan Breck, who turns up in the nick of time. David at first suspects him

as guilty "art or part," in Scots language, of the deed, and for good cause. "Here was murder done upon a man Alan hated, here was Alan skulking among the trees and running from the troops, and whether his was the hand that fired, or only the head that ordered signified but little, by my way of it my only friend in that country was blood-guilty in the first degree." He is easily convinced of Alan Breck's innocence on Alan Breck's word, though Alan practically admits he knew the actual assassin. The pair afterwards go on to the house of James Stewart of the Glen (not Glens as R. L. S. puts it), at Acharn in Duror of Appin. Much of what succeeds is based on recorded fact, selected, arranged, and paraphrased. Here is one incident from the report. Alan Breck wished to write, he got a scrap of paper and "looked about among the trees and finding a wood pigeon's quill made a pen of it, and having made some ink from some powder he took out of a powderhorn that was in his pocket, he wrote a letter." No writer of romance would let this incident escape him, and R. L. S. does not. The chronicle abounds in such picturesque touches. After the pair escape from the district, they wander in Inverness-shire and Perthshire, and so on to Stirling and Fife, then over the Forth to Queensferry and the Hawes Inn, which completes the circuit of travel.

Among interesting places mentioned is Ben Alder in South Inverness-shire, a wild part in the midst of the Grampians. They are tired to death, and though the weather is fine they are not in the

mood to admire the picturesque; also they must be supposed to take the eighteenth-century view of such scenery, which was that it was horrid, with no beauty or comeliness about it at all. An ancient native, according to Hill Burton, commented thus on such a prospect: "A very fulgar place and no' fit for a shentelman." A part of Ben Alder is a very steep and rugged mountain called Letternilik. It is full of holes like caves, and huge masses of stone are scattered over it. A small wood adheres to its side, and within this is "Cluny's Cage," so called because it was the hiding-place of Macpherson of Cluny. The floor of trees was made level with gravel and soil. Plants were left among the trees; ropes bound round these and attached at the top held the whole in position. The cage was suspended from a huge tree, which inclined over the roof. The top was thatched and covered with moss. The whole was round, inclining to oval in shape, and so hung from the precipice, whereof two stones served as chimney. It was contrived that the smoke from the fire crept gradually along the rock, and so did not betray the hiding-place. It only held six or seven, and the time was spent in playing cards, with usquebaugh at frequent intervals. Here Prince Charles Edward Stuart abode for a fortnight early in September 1746. A rough place for a Prince used to the luxuries of France! But he had experience of much worse before he escaped to the Continent.

In the Braes of Balquhidder, whereof Tannahill was afterwards to sing, and Dorothy Wordsworth was to celebrate in prose, they find a haven in the home

of the Maclarens. Here they are visited by Robert Oig, son of the "notorious Rob Roy," who died peaceably at his house at Balquhidder on the 28th December 1734. Hard by he had fought the last, and not the most successful of his many combats with Stewart of Invernahyle. Also he, his wife, and one of his sons lie buried in the churchyard there under tombstones which are much older than Rob Roy or any of his family. Another place mentioned is Uam Var, which gives its euphonious name to a brand of whisky. It means in Gaelic the Great Cave, and in fact there is a great cavern on its south side, a noted haunt of robbers of the period.

R. L. S. was too careful an artist to make his David enthusiastic about the wild seas or the wild hills over which he passed. Here is the account of the waste of heather in the chapter on the moor in *Kidnapped*: "The mist rose and died away, and showed us that country lying as waste as the sea; only the moorfowl and the peewees crying upon it, and far over to the east a herd of deer, moving like dots. Much of it was red with heather; much of the rest broken up with bogs and hags and peaty pools; some had been burned black in a heath-fire, and in another there was quite a forest of dead firs, standing like skeletons. A wearier-looking desert man never saw." There are lighter touches: "The clearness and sweetness of the night, the shapes of the hills like things asleep, and the fire dwindling away behind us like a bright spot in the midst of the moor." But there is no elaborate attempt to

picture the scenery. Such would have been out of place.

I turn to the other Highland story, *The Merry Men*. The time is somewhat later, as we gather by the introduction of Doctor William Robertson as Principal of the University of Edinburgh, to which office he was appointed in 1762. He is spoken of in connection with Spanish studies, therefore I note that his *History of Charles V* appeared in 1769, and his *History of America* in 1777. The impressive scenes are of the sea, always touched with a sense of dread and horror. "The Merry Men" are huge granite rocks that "go down together in troops to the sea like cattle on a summer's day; they are all shapes and sizes, and in fine weather you can go voyaging among them in a boat for hours, but when it is stormy then you can hear the roaring six miles off." "At the seaward end there comes the strongest of the bubble; and it's here that these big breakers dance together—the dance of death, it may be called—that have got the name, in these parts, of the Merry Men. . . . Whether they got their name from their movements, which are swift and antic, or from the shouting they make about the turn of the tide, so that all Aros shakes with it, is more than I can tell." And then we are told that on those terrible rocks the schooner goes instantly to pieces. R. L. S. had experience of the wild seas of the Western Isles, and the whole account, of which I have given a small part, was pieced together from first-hand knowledge. It is his most elaborate and most successful picture of a storm, more eerie and grue-

some than anything he has written of South Sea hurricanes.

He has almost nothing to say of Highland scenery in his *Letters*. There is a picture of a calm night at Oban, when the water was still "and in the dusk the black shadows of the hills reflected across to our very feet and the lights were reflected in long lines." This was in 1870, when he was twenty. Again, there is a note, eleven years after, in a letter to Mrs. Sitwell, of a cold summer at Braemar, graphic enough in its way but without local character.

I have still a word to say as to the geography or rather nomenclature of *The Merry Men*. I have already spoken of the "Merry Men of Mey" in the Pentland Firth. Attracted by their name, fascinated by their aspect, R. L. S. transports them south-west to the other side of Scotland, and sticks them down beside the little island of Earraid, which is here called Aros. There *is* an Aros in Mull. Indeed, a small ruin, a bay, an antique fortress, a village, all go by this name. These, however, are on the north-east coast of Mull, and so away from the Ross of Mull, which is on the south-west of the island. In the story, accordingly, this is called the Ross of Grisapol; but then again, on the west of the island of Coll, which is to the west of Mull, there is a place called Grisapoll. The Ben Kyaw of the tale is a mountain more than 3000 feet in height, and its name, we are told, is Mountain of the Mist. Now Ben More, which simply means the big mountain, is the greatest height in Mull, and is 3185 feet, and in fact is also a misty mountain. As for the story of

the *Spirito Santo*, the lost treasure ship of the Spanish Armada, such legends haunt the Hebrides. Our own day has witnessed desperate search in those parts for the buried riches in the ocean. They never come to anything, but at least they prove the existence of a remarkable, though latent, spirit of romance in the minds of men of commerce.

CHAPTER IX

THE TRIAL AT INVERARAY

THE Appin murder was a subject of intense interest in its own time and for long after. *Kidnapped* (published in 1881 and 1882) and *Catriona* (published in 1893) revived that interest and keep it alive. As late as 1907 Mr. David N. Mackay retold the story with great fullness for the series of *Notable Scottish Trials*. Here a brief summary must suffice. The murder took place in 1752, though R. L. S., for no very obvious reason, antedated it by a year. Culloden and the collapse of the last Jacobite rising were in 1746, only six years before; thus the events were still recent memories. James Stewart of the Glen and Alan Breck Stewart were afterwards tried for the murder. They had fought at Culloden. James Stewart had been pardoned; Alan Breck, who was the ward of the other, had not. James Stewart became farmer at Glenduror, and then at Acharn. The estates of the rebel chieftains were forfeited. Charles Stewart of Ardshiel was a fugitive in France. He was a relative of James Stewart's. The people on the Ardshiel estate paid double rent, part to Government, who were the owners of the estate at law, part

to their chieftain Ardshiel from clan affection or habit or tradition.

Colin Campbell of Glenure was factor under the Government for this among other forfeited estates. He was not at first on bad terms with James Stewart, whom he employed in collecting the rents and so forth. However, there were complaints against Glenure that he was not strict enough. Certain of the tenants of the Ardshiel estates got notice to quit at Whitsuntide (15th May) 1752. They were loath to leave their holdings, and James Stewart was anxious to do what he could for them. Having procured the requisite authority, he journeyed to Edinburgh, and on the 18th of April presented a bill of suspension to the Court of Session. He got a sist or stay of proceedings in the meantime, but on the 5th of May the bill was refused. James Stewart had quitted the capital by this time, but Glenure, who had also come there, did not set off till the 7th. On the 11th he left his home for Fort William, and on Thursday, 14th May, he quitted Fort William for Appin, intending to put up for the night at Kintalline, and on the next day evict the tenants in due form of law. There was with him Donald Kennedy, a sheriff's officer from Inveraray, who rode first; also Mungo Campbell, a Writer from Edinburgh, connected by blood with Glenure, who came next. After Glenure himself was Glenure's servant Mackenzie, who brought up the rear. None of the party was armed. All went well as they passed through Mamore and crossed the ferry at Baliachulish, which took them over Loch Leven, southward into Appin.

There had been rumours of danger, but Glenure thought himself safe when he got into Appin, for he had left his mother's country. His mother was a Cameron, and the Camerons of Mamore were strong Jacobites, and so hostile to his present business. There is ground for believing that he had been watched all day from the heights that overhung the road, but no proper opportunity was found for attack. The party were nearing Kintalline and were passing the wood of Lettermore, when from the near height someone fired a shot, and Glenure fell stricken to death. The assassin ran up the hill, being followed for some distance by Campbell, who described him as "a man with a short, dark-coloured coat and a gun in his hand." Campbell did not get sight of the other's face, but thought that the distance was so great that he would not have recognized him if he had. This glimpse, such as it was, was all that was ever known at first hand of the assassin. The body was later in the day taken to the change-house at Kintalline, and thence to Glenure.

The murder caused great commotion. It was that of a man in position, a servant of the Government, carrying out the orders of the Government in evicting certain Jacobite tenants. Had he not been slain by the tenants or their friends? Was his death not the result of a plot? Were the Jacobites now to assassinate when they could not fight in fair combat? The serious nature of the case is at once apparent. Suspicion fell first of all on two people. Alan Breck was in the neighbour-

hood—was at Ballachulish, indeed, that very day. Again, James Stewart was at Acharn, not many minutes' ride from the scene. It was said that when told of it he exclaimed that whoever had committed the deed, he himself would have to pay the penalty of death. Guilty or innocent, he recognized his dangerous position.

Alan Breck, though diligently sought for, was never caught. There was no difficulty about James Stewart. He was taken into custody two days after the murder. His son Alan, about twenty, and about twenty other people, his servants and others, were likewise seized on suspicion, or in order to keep them as witnesses. The case ultimately resolved itself into a private prosecution by the relatives in the name of the widow and children of the murdered man, with the concurrence of the Lord Advocate. The accused was harshly treated. He was not allowed to see his advisers or his family. Thus he was prevented from "running his letters," as the Scots law term goes—that is, forcing on his trial. After a formal notice given by him, he must be tried within a certain time or released. Had he had proper legal advice, he would assuredly have given this notice. Then the case had been heard in Edinburgh, where it would have been more fairly dealt with.

His agent, Mr. Stewart of Edinglassie, procured his first interview by an accident. He was proceeding to Fort William on this very business when he encountered a party of soldiers on the road at Tyndrum. They were escorting his client

to Inveraray! This was on 2nd September. On the next day the Gregorian calendar was adopted. Eleven days were dropped out, and the 3rd became the 14th, a circumstance not favourable to the accused, for it deprived him of time when time might seem all-important. The trial was fixed for Thursday the 21st at the Circuit Court at Inveraray. It was not till the 19th that his Counsel were allowed to see the prisoner. Perhaps he was not so much prejudiced by this as has been supposed. He had able men as advocates and agent, and they were giving all their attention to the matter. A vast collection of facts relating to one transaction can be got up in an incredibly short time by legal experts, especially when there is oral communication and an opportunity for discussion. The really serious thing was that the murdered man was a Campbell and the accused was a Stewart. Clan feeling and political feeling ran high. The trial was at Inveraray, in the heart of the Campbell country. The court-house still stands, but it is now the Argyll Estate office, a curious reminder of the continuing influence of that great ducal house.

The then Duke of Argyll presided. He was Archibald, 3rd Duke. He had been mixed up with all the political movements of the time, of course on the Whig side. He had been a Commissioner for the Union of the Parliaments. He was afterwards an Extraordinary Lord of Session, and in 1710 was made Lord Justice-General of Scotland. As such he was head of the Justiciary-Court, though

it was not the habit of the particular noblemen who held the office to sit there. As late as 1830 the Lord Justice-General was a different person from the Lord President of the Court of Session. The latter was always a professional lawyer; the first was not, but was usually some great nobleman. The Duke, as it happened, had not merely received a special legal training, but was a man of wide culture. He was a great collector of books, his library being one of the best in Britain. It is to be noted that before 1747 Argyll as "superior" (in the Scots law phrase) of the land that comprises the Campbell territory would have had the right of trying criminals within that territory, together with the power of pit and gallows—that is, putting them to death when convicted. The Heritable Jurisdictions Act of the last-mentioned year, for which he voted, deprived him of those rights. He received compensation to the amount of £20,000. The Act divided the country into circuits. The county of Argyll was part of the Western Circuit.

The Duke had two Judges with him, Lord Elchies and Lord Kilkerran. Lord Elchies "was if anything too keen a Whig," it is alleged, but both were well spoken of by their contemporaries. According to a Parliament House joke, they neither ate nor drank. A reputation for moderation in such things was not universal among old Scots Judges. In an ordinary case, the tribunal might have been excellent. When it came to choose the fifteen jurors out of a list of thirty-four, the Judges on whom the duty fell, according to the practice of

the time, picked out eleven who bore the name of Campbell and four who were of the Campbell country. There were eleven on the list from Bute, and three Stewarts; but they were all passed over.

The first day of the trial was taken up with a debate upon the relevancy. The charge was that James Stewart and Alan Breck had conspired to murder Glenure by the hands of Alan Breck. Obviously, Alan Breck must be proved to have done the murder, or there was no case against Stewart. Now, said Stewart's Counsel, you must prove Alan Breck guilty first of all; but you cannot try him in his absence, and you have not caught him, so the trial of James Stewart cannot take place. Another point was afterwards raised, and indeed is dwelt on in *Catriona* by the "doer" or agent or solicitor for James Stewart. You could not, he urged, even outlaw Alan Breck for non-appearance, because he had not been properly cited to appear, according to law. But this point is too trifling for discussion here, also it is too technical. Those preliminary debates on the relevancy were features of that and an earlier age. Counsel on both sides took occasion to show their learning, and though in the result their objections were always repelled, neither side would have missed the discussion on any account. There was some authority for the position taken by Stewart's Counsel, but in fact the authorities against were even stronger; so is common sense and the present practice. True, Alan Breck must be found guilty before Stewart could be convicted, but he could only be found

guilty as part of the case against Stewart. Were Breck afterwards captured, the proceedings must all have been gone over again, and his guilt proved with no reference to this trial.

The objections having been formally repelled, on the morning of the next day, 23rd September, at half-past six, the jury were empanelled, and the proof began. The curious reader must be referred to Mr. Mackay's pages for this. The chief points of evidence against Alan Breck were that he had expressed enmity to the deceased on more than one occasion, and in drink those expressions had become pointed, amounting to a threat of slaughter. He had desired "the red fox's skin"; also he vowed he would make blackcocks of those interfering with the Ardshiel tenants, and his hearers inferred that Glenure was the blackcock signified in special. He had asked the ferryman at Ballachulish whether Glenure had crossed from Lochaber. He had a dark suit on that same day, whilst almost the only thing known about the assassin was that he wore a dark grey suit. A Judge of to-day would tell a modern jury that these were suspicious circumstances, but they were nothing more. The historical Alan Breck was a person with a loose tongue even when he was sober. It was natural for one in his position to rail at any person in authority, and when in liquor his statements required a heavy discount. Again, dark suits were not uncommon. His flight was explained by the fact that he was a deserter and a fugitive, and the country was sure to be searched far and near.

James Stewart admitted having supplied him with money to go away on this account. Mr. Mackay has pointed out that Alan was knock-kneed. This would make him run in a particular manner; but Mungo Campbell noted nothing in particular in the running of the man, almost certainly the assassin whom he saw in the distance. But as the fugitive was really jumping up a mountain, the deformity might not be noticeable.

Alan himself declared again and again that he had nothing to do with the murder. His denial counts for little, also the common talk of the neighbourhood showed that he was suspected by everybody; but again, that was only vague suspicion. However, the jury had to be satisfied in the first place that Alan had actually fired the shot, and then that James Stewart had conspired with him in his murderous design. The evidence on this last point was that the pair were extremely intimate; also both had threatened Glenure and the Campbells generally. The murder happened on the eve of the proposed evictions, after James Stewart had almost strained the process of the law to stop those evictions. Was he not smarting under the ill-success of his efforts? Then he had expressed apprehension when told of the murder. Moreover, he had procured the hiding of his own guns and Alan Breck's clothes. Also, he had helped Alan Breck with money to escape. Here again were circumstances of suspicion, but here again there was nothing more. There was really no evidence worthy of the name to go to a jury at

all. Yet the jury were impatient to find a verdict of "Guilty." It is said that as Sheriff Brown, afterwards Lord Coalstoun, was addressing the jury for the defence, a Campbell among them called out, "Pray, sir, cut it short; we have enough of it." However, it was not till the Sunday morning that the proceedings were over, and the jury retired. They almost immediately agreed upon their verdict, which was dated on Sunday the 24th, and delivered on Monday the 25th, when the Court resumed. It was one of "Guilty." Argyll sentenced the prisoner in an inflamed political harangue, to which Stewart replied in a few dignified words, protesting his innocence. On the 8th of November 1752 he was taken to Ballachulish Ferry, where a gallows had been erected. Here he declared his innocence for the last time, after which he suffered death.

It is not necessary to suppose that the judge or jury or witnesses acted in bad faith. Argyll and his jury of clansmen honestly believed in the guilt of the accused. Indeed, they believed in it before the trial began, which is the gravamen of the charge against them. It is impossible to know what Elchies and Kilkerran really thought of the proceedings. Probably they were carried away by the current, sympathetically affected by the prejudices of the time and the place, and as keen to convict as Argyll himself. One curious point has not been noticed. James Stewart was undoubtedly technically guilty of an offence even greater than that of murder. That offence was treason; yet no one

hinted at it. It came about in this way. He was in law a traitor for his share in the battle of Culloden; but for that he had been pardoned, and so to speak he started afresh. Alan Breck, on the other hand, had never been pardoned, and his case was a much worse one. He had fought on the Hanoverian side at Prestonpans, had been taken prisoner, and had changed his party. Also he was present at Culloden, and had recruited for the King's enemies. Thus he was both deserter and traitor. Now in the law of treason, which since the Union in 1707 has been the same in England and Scotland, there is no distinction between principals and accessaries. He who comforts and assists a traitor becomes a traitor himself. Thus on the Western Circuit in 1685 the "Lady" Alice Lisle was charged with harbouring one Hicks, a rebel; and was found guilty, and suffered as a traitor on this ground. The sentence was reversed by Act of Parliament after the Revolution, but the case will serve for an illustration. It is difficult to see what James's Counsel could have urged if he had been indicted as a traitor for facilitating the escape of Alan Breck by openly supplying him with money. It might have seemed harsh and oppressive to charge him. Perhaps, even, it would not have suited the ends of those prosecuting who desired his punishment for this crime. Shall we say for this crime alone? Yet if this be not the answer, it was a strange case of forgetfulness on the part of the prosecution, or they were not quite so vicious as has been supposed.

The reader of *Catriona* will remember that David

Balfour, just before he is seized and taken to the Bass, assists Alan Breck to escape on board the *Thistle* off Gillane sands under the lee of the island of Fidra. He also was technically guilty of treason in so doing, but this does not trouble David. Apparently he is more afraid of being brought in for a share in the Appin murder than anything else. He appears at Inveraray only in time to be too late. He is at church there on Sunday, the 24th September, by which time the trial was over and the jury had agreed on their verdict, though it was not delivered till next day, the 25th. Nothing comes of it all, and next day he sees the proceedings from the Justices' private room, where none could see him; then, without attempting to interfere, he goes quietly off with the Lord Advocate. Considering the desperate anxiety he had shown to get to Inveraray and the risks he had run, one would hardly have thought him so tame. Had he been an historical character, it is doubtful if his evidence had been believed. He might have found himself in the dock as art and part in the crime, of which fate indeed he had some apprehension.

One or two interesting points arose. Whilst holding that there was no real evidence against James Stewart, I ask, Is it not most probable he knew who the murderer was? He must have been someone mixed up in the evictions. This knowledge would, however, come to him after the event, would at the best have been no more than suspicion, and it could have done him no good to have stated that suspicion. Also, his clan would have

looked on him as a traitor. Now Alan Breck arrived in France in March 1753. He stated that the murderer was Alan-beg, by whom he no doubt meant Alan, the son of James of the Glen. He was a lad of about twenty at the time of the murder. In a letter a year before he had used threatening language towards Glenure and his band. He would not be restrained as his father was by the same considerations of prudence, and his guilt would give a decisive reason for his father's silence. All this amounts to very little. It has been said that there was as much evidence against him as against his father, which is not exactly true, since the father, from age, position, and experience, was more fitted to take part in a plot than was the son. However, he was not prosecuted; he was discharged from prison, and nothing more is heard of him.

All the writers on the trial—Andrew Lang, R. L. S., and Mr. Mackay—assert that the name of the murderer is known to the people of Appin to this day, but that it is a point of honour not to divulge. And they more or less darkly hint that they themselves are in the secret. I doubt if the name is known with any certainty. The neighbourhood at one time fixed on Alan Breck. That we see from the trial. If it is possible to remove that suspicion, the name should be given; to publish it is a duty incumbent on those who know. Here a mere tradition is no proof. It is more than a century and a half since the date of the tragedy, which is now probably incapable of solution. The Appin murder will remain one of the unsolved mysteries of history.

CHAPTER X

SOME REAL PEOPLE IN *KIDNAPPED* AND *CATRIONA*

KIDNAPPED and *Catriona* are historical novels. They deal with people who played their part, great or small, upon the stage of their time. What of the chief figures? Are Stevenson's pictures true to the life? I do not deal with every person he mentions. I have said all I intend to say of the Duke of Argyll and the other Judges sitting at the trial; and with two important exceptions, I shall say nothing about the Counsel on either side.

I take first James More, or more fully James More MacGregor or Drummond, indicted as James MacGregor or Campbell, "a son of the notorious Rob Roy," as R. L. S. describes him. In fact, he was the third of the five sons of his father. He was born about 1710. He first appears in history as charged, and no doubt on excellent evidence, with stealing a cow. He was thrust into prison, but presently escaped. In 1735, Robin, his youngest brother, shot Maclaren of Invernenty at the plough. He absconded, but James and another brother were tried for their alleged share in the murder. Duncan Forbes, then Lord Advocate, prosecuted, but the verdict was not proven. They were also accused

of having houghed four head of cattle belonging to Donald Maclaren, kinsman of John the deceased. It was also urged that they were habit-and-repute thieves. It was somewhat weakly pleaded for them that though they might be guilty of reset of theft ("receiving"), they were not so bad as many of their neighbours. The Court gave full effect to this plea, since it merely ordained them to find caution in the sum of £200 to be of good behaviour for seven years. Well might Bailie Nicol Jarvie exclaim to their father, "I'se plainly telling ye, ye are bringing up your family to gang an ill gate."

In the '45 James More hesitated; for, like his father, he could look at both sides of the cards. He wanted a commission in a Highland regiment from the Government; but he was not satisfied, or perhaps the tide of Highland enthusiasm carried him away. At any rate, he elected for the Stuarts, and fought well for them. A small fort had been built at Inversnaid to overawe the Macgregors. James, with only twelve clansmen, attacked and carried it, making the much larger garrison prisoner. He took part in that swift rush at Prestonpans which carried all before it, but fell with a broken thigh in the thick of the fight. He raised himself on his elbow and shouted to his men, "My lads, I am not dead! By God! I shall see if any of you does not do his duty." Better for his name had he died there and then. He fought at Culloden, was attainted with many better men, but succeeded somehow or other in making terms with the Government. He returned to Balquhidder, where, as Andrew Lang suggests, he

" probably eked out a livelihood by cattle-stealing and spying." In a few years he was again at grips with the law.

A young woman named Jean Kay or Wright lived at Edenbellie, Balfron, in Stirling. She had been a widow for four months, and was possessed of some property. The young Macgregors were probably in desperate straits. Cattle-lifting and blackmailing were extinct callings. It occurred to one of them (you suspect James) that a marriage might be arranged between the widow and Robin. Accordingly, on the 3rd of December 1750, a band of them entered the house. Jean hid herself in a closet, but the terrific Gaelic curses were too much for the mother, and she produced the trembling girl, who pleaded in vain the sudden nature of the proposal. Her request for time to consider was scornfully rejected. She was presently thrown over a horse and carried off from place to place in the Highlands, where, after about three months, a mock form of marriage was gone through. Robin had an almost childish faith in the efficacy of the ceremony. Jean was brought to Edinburgh, and there he lost grip of her. The poor thing speedily died from fright and fatigue, and proceedings against the three brothers for " ha: ·sucken," or forcible attack on a house, as well as various other offences involved, were taken. Again Robin could not be found, and was outlawed. But the other two were put on their trial. Robert was acquitted; James was tried on the 5th August 1752. The jury returned a special verdict. It seems they meant that he should be punished, but

not capitally. There was some doubt as to the legal effect of the verdict, so the case was adjourned for further consideration to the 20th of November of that year, when the Court was to fix the appropriate sentence, which there is reason to believe would have been capital. But on the 16th he escaped from the Castle, to which he had been removed, the Tolbooth not being considered sufficiently secure. The town was full of Highlanders, as caddies, chairmen, even City Guard itself. There were rumours of a rescue, for clan feeling was strong. No doubt the authorities had in their mind the leading case of Captain Porteous.

Whilst James lay in prison, the Appin murder occurred; whereupon the prisoner made a desperate effort to turn the series of events to his own advantage. James of the Glen, who knew him personally, had visited him in prison in April 1752, when he was in Edinburgh on business connected with the bill of suspension. According to James More, a suggestion had been made him to assist in the murder of Glenure, with a round sum for reward. The private prosecutor swallowed this no doubt invented story, and did all they could to get him as a witness; but James was convicted though not sentenced, and he could not appear unless pardoned, which accounts for his zeal in the matter. The Government very properly refused their consent; so, though his name appears in the list of witnesses for the prosecution in the indictment, number 128, he was not and could not have been called. No remark was openly made at the trial as to his non-

appearance, but it has been asserted that a written statement by him was privately given to the jury. Stevenson adopts this, though there is no actual proof of what in itself is very unlikely.

We come to his escape, and here for one brief moment, so to speak, Catriona appears an actual person on the scene. We know she gives her name to the book. She is the most charming woman that appears in all Stevenson's many pages, and yet of her we know very little. On this 16th of November, no doubt in the evening, James More sat in prison in company with his wife, when a visit from his cobbler was announced, who, pursuant to order, had brought him a pair of shoes newly soled. A great din was presently heard within the apartment. Macgregor and his spouse were loudly upbraiding the man of leather for his abominable workmanship; then the door was opened, and the "souter" thrust forth still grumbling. A strange figure, forsooth! A scarecrow greatcoat wrapped him from head to foot, a leather apron was proof of his calling, and his shoes were a disgrace to his trade. His red stockings were in keeping. No doubt it was a cold night, and that was why the greasy red nightcap was drawn so far down, and the broad hat was plastered so completely over his head. He shuffled off, grumbling, amidst the loudly expressed jeers and merriment of the jailers, and so vanished into the night; and there was quiet within the prison, until the soldiers had occasion to enter the room, when not James More but his daughter was discovered, a tall, hand-

some lass, who had disguised herself as a cobbler, clapped the disguise on her father with her mother's aid, and in fact changed places with him. Apparently the two women were let go at once. We hear of nothing done to them. Alas! we hear nothing more of Catriona at all, and even her name is an invention. James More had a plentiful progeny—a dozen or a baker's dozen, it would seem. His own and their piteous straits he urged on a hard-hearted and close-fisted Government in offering his services as a spy, but who is to tell what became of them or any of them? Stevenson adopts a rumour of the time that the authorities connived at his escape; but if so, they carried their make-believe pretty far. A long and minute inquiry followed; two officers were "broke," a sergeant was reduced to the ranks, and a warder was flogged.

After his escape James hurried southward. He found himself at nightfall on a wild moor in Cumberland. Four vagrant men were presently discovered in company in an adjacent thicket. James was glad to recognize in one of them his old friend Billy Marshall, the gipsy. Billy was under a cloud about some trifling affair in Galloway—fire-raising, apparently—but he very hospitably entertained the fugitive and helped him on his way to Ireland, from whence he escaped to France. And then he began intrigues with both sides—professed that it was his devotion to the Stuarts that had brought about his banishment, and offered them much valuable information. In particular, he averred

that there were three thousand Macgregors, descendants of members of the clan, driven from Scotland one hundred and fifty years before, and ready to invade Argyllshire in the interest of King James. So he told Macgregor of Bohaldie, chief of the clan, then living about three miles from Paris, occupying himself in the manufacture or collection of tortoiseshell snuff-boxes, wherein you touched a spring and on the instant a portrait of James VIII met your delighted gaze! In such puerile forms sentimental Jacobites delighted to show their devotion. Bohaldie, though he kept up communication with James More, to the end suspected him of treachery, and Lord Strathallan declared him a brave man, but with "an indifferent character as to real honesty." Evidently he could get nothing from the exiled Court.

He had no better luck with the English Government. They allowed him to come to London, listened to his statements, but would not pay for the information — took what they could get, in fact, and gave nothing in return. Now Alan Breck was in France, and James offered to the English Government to secure him and deliver him over at Dover. Even according to his own account, Alan was too much for him. He had made himself very friendly, but Alan was not deceived. "The very night I intended to have carried him away" Breck made off, having thoroughly plundered the other's cloak bag and appropriated no less than four snuff-boxes — possibly of the tortoiseshell variety carved by Bohaldie himself. Breck was

quite convinced of his treachery and his plots, and vowed openly that if he could but catch him he would certainly have his life. However, they never met, and history is lacking a remarkable duel. He told Bohaldie that he had the offer of "handsome bread in the Government service," but he nobly answered, "I was born in the character of a gentleman." His last days were sad indeed. He was in bad health, and in the most desperate straits for money. He appeals to Bohaldie for any kind of work—at least for the loan of the Highland bagpipes: "I would put them in order, and play some melancholy tunes." This was on 25th September 1754, and early in October he was dead. Andrew Lang opines that R. L. S. divined his character with the instinct of genius. Neither in history nor fiction has anyone a good word to say for him. He seemed genuinely concerned for his family, and pressed on the Government the banishment in place of the execution of Robin, his younger brother. It would at least save the expense of a trial, he urged. In double-dealing he took after his father, but remember he owed no allegiance to the Stuarts, under whom the clan had been proscribed and its members hunted with fire and sword, the very name forbidden; nor had the other side shown him special favour. And this is all that one can say for him.

His brother Robin appears in Maclaren's house in the Braes of Balquhidder in *Kidnapped*, and beats Alan Breck in playing on the pipes. This Robin Oig—or the young, since he was the fifth and youngest son of Rob Roy—was born about 1718, and

was thus only seventeen when he murdered Maclaren of Invernenty. For this he was never punished. Possibly he went abroad. It is stated that he was present at the battle of Fontenoy, and presumably fought against the English, though this does not necessarily follow. As a lad he was slender and feebly made, but his weakness of body was more than compensated for by his fierceness of spirit. He was described as " that daft laddie Rob," and as " mad and quarrelsome and given to pranks." I have told of his masquerading as the husband of Jean Kay. It was believed, and no doubt rightly, that he was a tool in the hands of his deeper brother James. The authorities sought for him in vain for some years, but in 1753 he was taken at a fair at Gartmore and conveyed by a military party to Edinburgh, where he arrived on the 26th of May. The law was very deliberate in his case. He was not tried till the 27th of January 1754. The case lasted from between seven and eight in the morning till five o'clock the next morning. The jury considered their verdict for five hours, and then brought him in "Guilty," and on the 16th February he suffered in the Grassmarket. He was " very genteelly dressed," showed some anxiety as to the fate of his brother James, and professed he died a member of the Church of Rome—altogether, made a more edifying end than could have been expected of a wild Highlandman. After hanging for half an hour the body was delivered to his friends, and by them conveyed to the Highlands for burial.

A more important and interesting figure is Alan

Breck Stewart. There is a very engaging portrait of him in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*. He fights as well as Chicot the jester, and is altogether a very "pretty" man. Some think that this is too flattering, and that Alan was as great a rascal as any of the Macgregors. But no incident recorded of him is inconsistent with Stevenson's picture. The ascertained facts are scanty, but here they are. He was a son of Donald Stewart of the Appin country, a relative of James Stewart of the Glen, to whom his father left the charge of him. His mother was still living in Rannoch, though James was made tutor and curator to her son. Perhaps a stronger hand was needed. You gather that a warm affection existed between Alan Breck, so called because he was pock-marked, and his guardian. But Alan spent a wild youth. He was hail fellow well met with all the spendthrifts of the neighbourhood. He soon ran through his fortune. Then he enlisted and fought on the Government side at Prestonpans. You believe he never fought worse, for he was already a rebel at heart. He was taken prisoner, and joined Prince Charles's army; so if he turned his coat he only turned it once, for through good and ill he stuck to the Jacobite cause. He fought at Culloden, and escaped the destruction that overtook so many of his name. He fled to France, where he took service in one of the Scots regiments under the French King. Those exiled Highlanders made excellent soldiers. More of them were wanted, so Alan Breck came over again and again to recruit.

He had another object. His chief, Stewart of Ardshiels, had lost his lands to the Government, but his tenants still paid something to their old landlord, who was also their chieftain. Breck helped to collect this—sometimes, it was alleged, with threats and curses—and conveyed the money over the water. Thus he was a person in some position, and trusted by people of some position in France; and it is not suggested that he ever betrayed his trust. I have already discussed the question of his guilt or innocence in the matter of the Appin murder. If he knew who was the actual assassin, his was not the hand that fired the shot. He was on the spot at the time, and rumour, as was inevitable, followed him, so that the officers of his own regiment declined his company. Personally he was brave, though that almost goes without saying. He went about the country without molestation, and lived for periods in Edinburgh in the house of a friend at the back of Fountain Well—that is, near John Knox's house in the Netherbow, possibly in Trunk's Close. No doubt he was a spendthrift. It is noted that in 1750 he had run up a huge bill, which James of the Glen was called upon to pay, and did pay. It is difficult to know what he had to do in Edinburgh except enjoy himself, and that must have been in the evening, and chiefly in taverns.

After the trial he was extensively "papered." He was described as "a desperate foolish fellow, a tall pock-pitted lad with very black hair; he wore a blue coat and metal buttons, an old red vest and

breeches of the same colour." Again he was described as "five feet ten inches high, his face much pitted with the smallpox, in-knee'd and round-shouldered (no wonder Alan Breck swore as he read the unflattering account!). He was about thirty years old. His hat had a feather in it." There is much characteristic of him in the report. Thus Angus Macdonald, one of the witnesses, tells how, in company with Duncan Campbell and another, some little time before he had met Alan Breck on the road, "Alan gave Duncan the common salutation, and said that the last time he had been in Duncan's house he was bad company, though it was not he that was so much bad company as the drink." As Duncan was a change-keeper at Annat, the point of Alan's remark is sufficiently obvious. It seems from the evidence of this same Duncan which immediately follows that Alan in the previous month had been at his house and had indulged in much loose talk, though he "was not drunk, for he could walk and talk as well as any man, but it could easily be observed that he had been drinking." Then a certain Malcolm Bane Macoll, who was also a change-keeper, tells how Alan and one John Stewart came to his house after dusk. They sat up all night carousing, and in the morning John Maccoll, a servant in the house, entered in a shabby condition. Alan was informed this was "an honest, poor man with a numerous family of small children," whereupon he directed his friend John Stewart to give Maccoll a stone of meal, which he said he would pay for. This was arranged, and

then Alan would have Maccoll drink a dram with him, "and told him that if he would fetch him the red fox's skin he would give him what was much better; to which the said John Maccoll answered he was no sportsman, and that he was much better skilled in ploughing and delving." The "red fox" meant Red Colin—that is to say, Glenure; but it was only the subsequent murder that gave those idle expressions any importance. They are in the very manner of the Stevensonian Alan.

Our swashbuckler friend escaped to France. He does not appear to have ever revisited this country, though he lived long afterwards into the Revolution; in fact, Scott in the appendix to *Rob Roy* tells how a friend of his was in Paris in 1789, and, in order to see a procession, had obtained entrance to the chamber of a Scots Benedictine priest. By the fire was "a tall, thin, raw-boned, grim-looking old man with a military decoration on his breast." They talked a little in French about the objects of interest in Paris, when the old man muttered, with a sigh and a sharp Highland accent, "Deil ane o' them a' is worth the Hie Street of Edinburgh." This was Alan Breck Stewart living quietly and respectably on a small military pension. "Auld Reekie," his Highland hills, and his turbulent youth —dim, far-off memories in a life that was nearing its close. There is no further note of him, and the curtain falls. At least the last scene is fitting and in character.

Two of the prosecuting Counsel on the trial of James Stewart of the Glen make considerable

figures in *Catriona*. These are William Grant, afterwards Lord Prestongrange, and Simon Fraser, called by courtesy the Master of Lovat. Prestongrange was the second son of Sir Francis Grant Lord Cullen, was born about 1700 and died in 1764. He was admitted Advocate on the 24th of February 1722, and in 1731 was appointed Procurator to the Church of Scotland, and principal Clerk to the General Assembly. In 1736 he wrote a pamphlet entitled *Remarks on the state of the Church of Scotland with respect to patronage with reference to a Bill now depending before Parliament*. This was reprinted more than a century afterwards, in 1841 to wit, as Number 8 of the "Select Anti-Patronage Library." The evangelical reaction was then in full swing, and you easily gather that Grant was of an evangelical turn of mind. But his time was the days before the Moderates. You remember Stevenson's description of him in the kirk at Inveraray: "He sat well forward like an eager horseman in the saddle, his lips moving with relish, his eyes glued on the minister; the doctrine was clearly to his mind."

No doubt the sermon was an able one. R. L. S. assures us that the preacher was "a skilled hand." The collegiate charge of Inveraray was then occupied by two divines of the name of Campbell. The minister of the second charge, Alexander Campbell, had been presented by Duke Archibald in October 1744. He is reported a man of "much eminence and ability." He was as bookish as His Grace, for he "left a valuable library," which after his death was disposed of by the Messrs. Foulis, the famous

booksellers of Glasgow. He married the daughter of Campbell of Inveraw, and his daughter also married a Campbell. His colleague, the minister of the first charge, was the Rev. Patrick Campbell, A.M. He had succeeded a Campbell, and his first wife was also a Campbell, which is about all we know of him. The Campbells, you see, were as much in evidence in the pulpit as in the jury-box. I prefer to believe that the Assize sermon during the Appin trial was preached by Alexander. At any rate, he had some further intercourse with the panel, since he administered spiritual consolation to him during the last days of his life. But I wander from Prestongrange, for whom the path of piety and preferment was the same. He went the ordinary round of the successful lawyer. In 1737 he was Solicitor-General. In 1746 he was Lord Advocate. Next year he sat as M.P. for the Elgin Burghs. It was an important and troubled period. His it was to draft the Acts of Parliament and superintend the criminal proceedings made necessary by the rebellion. These are said to have induced less ill-will against him than might have been expected. Thus Ramsey of Ochtertyre and a fellow-Judge, Lord Woodhouselee, praise his rectitude and moral feeling, his virtuous integrity, his candour of judgment, his liberality of sentiment, his winning gentleness of manner. "These were the pure offspring of a warm and benevolent heart." In 1754 he went to the Bench as Lord Prestongrange. He died at Bath on the 17th of May 1764, and was buried in the family vault at Prestonpans.

It is easy to pick out the principal stages in the career of a great official power, but the touches that show the real man under the official cloak are sadly lacking. It is mere gossip to say that he had a hundred guineas for his work at the trial. There seem to be no stories or traditions about him in the Parliament House. Although he went down to Inveraray to prosecute James Stewart, he did not in any way take undue advantage of his position. His speech for the Crown was a fair piece of reasoning. You judge him a competent and careful high official, one likely to proceed with caution, to walk warily in his great office. But then this is not the debonair and brilliant figure that Stevenson's imagination has projected on the screen. He was surely the last man in the world to play those tricks with which he is credited. No reason is given why he should protect David Balfour, no reason why he should not have put him in prison, and no real reason why he should have shut him up on the Bass Rock. He is touched off as a convivial person; but it was a convivial time, and Edinburgh was a convivial place, so this may pass. But to put the matter shortly, the Prestongrange of *Catriona* is a well-nigh impossible person. And what about charming Barbara Grant? Now Prestongrange was married to Grizel, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Millar. She long survived her husband, only dying in 1792, aged eighty-three. There were four daughters, though in the romance we only hear of three. The eldest was Janet, who married John, fourth Earl of Hyndford, and died in 1818. The

second, Agnes, married Sir George Suttie of Balgone. The third, Jean, married Robert Dundas of Arniston, the second Lord President of that name. The fourth, Christian, died unmarried in 1761. The three girls, you see, made good marriages, and that is all to be said. The brilliant Barbara is entirely imaginary.

Simon Fraser is an interesting figure, though drawn in dark colours—so dark, indeed, that the clan Fraser have uttered angry protests; but I think R. L. S. divined what must have been the character of the man. The best thing that can be said for Fraser is that his position was difficult. He was drawn only half, if at all, convinced into a plot which put him in peril of his life and ruined his prospects. He made a desperate effort to get back all his family had lost. In a great measure he succeeded, though not for him was the title restored. It is no part of my plan to set my page with brilliant passages from *Catriona*. Yet I will give the line or two telling of him during that Inveraray sermon. It is a portrait by contrast with that of the Lord Advocate: "As for Simon Fraser, he appeared like a blot, and almost a scandal, in the midst of that attentive congregation, digging his hands in his pockets, shifting his legs, clearing his throat, rolling up his bald eyebrows, and shooting out his eyes to right and left, now with a yawn, now with a secret smile. At times, too, he would take the Bible in front of him, run it through, seem to read a bit, run it through again, and stop and yawn prodigiously, the whole as if for exercise."

Simon Fraser, Master of Lovat, was born on the 19th October 1726. He was the son of Simon Lord Lovat, and was dragged by him into the Rebellion. Old Lovat blamed his son sometimes for backwardness and sometimes for forwardness. "He was forcing his son out, and what could he do more?" he once urged. Various touches show the Master indignant with his father. Thus he threatened that he would himself go to the President (Duncan Forbes of Culloden, the Lord President), and put the saddle on the right horse. "Good God, how can he use me so!" said he of his father. There were violent quarrels, in one of which "the Master rose up and took his bonnet and threw it upon the floor, and threw the white cockade in the fire." Yet he too was persuaded, or perhaps was carried, away. With six hundred of his father's vassals he joined Prince Charles at Bannockburn before Falkirk on the 17th of January 1746. He was not present at Culloden, but was coming up with three hundred fresh men when half-way between Culloden and Inverness he met the Frasers retreating from defeat. His was one of the forty-three names included in the Act of Attainder of 4th June 1746; but on the 2nd of August of that year he gave himself up, and was confined in Edinburgh Castle till the 15th August 1747. His father was beheaded at Tower Hill on the 8th April of that year, and his title was extinguished with him.

In 1750 a full pardon was granted to the son, and on 25th July he was admitted a member of the Scots Bar. He was the fifth and junior Counsel for

the prosecution. His speech of the 21st September 1752 in the Inveraray court-house was most violent and unfair. It was marked by all the zeal or rancour of the renegade. He soon deserted the Bar for the Army. He came to London with Alexander Wedderburn, afterwards the first Scots Lord Chancellor, and was intimate with many eminent people. In 1757 he raised among his clansmen a regiment for the royal service, and became its Lieutenant-Colonel, and was present at Quebec under Wolfe. He fought with the British forces in Portugal, and became Major-General. An old Highland soldier, hearing him address his troops in Gaelic, burst out: "Simon, you are a good soldier; as long as you live, Simon of Lovat never dies." On the other hand, Mrs. Grant of Laggan says: "He differed from his father only as a chained-up fox does from one at liberty"; also he is described as "hard and rapacious under a polished exterior." In 1774 he got back the estates of the family, ten years earlier than any other rebel. He was in the House of Commons, and powerful and influential. Probably he might have got back the title, but death came to him in London in 1782. He had married an English lady, but left no descendants, and when the title was restored, it was to another branch of the family.

Another character was an ancestor of R. L. S., being the great-grandfather on the mother's side. Perhaps that is why he is introduced, for he is only connected with the main narrative in so far as Mr. Rankeillor, the Writer at Queensferry, gives David an introduction to him, and he in turn furnishes the

hero with a note to the Lord Advocate. Yet Mr. James Balfour of Pilrig was a man of some importance in his day, and R. L. S., who showed a keen interest in his "forbears" amongst other things, investigated carefully the history of this gentleman, though he had not the advantage of the work on the subject which the family historian, Miss Barbara Balfour-Melville, in recent years (1907) has given to the world, or at any rate the small section of it interested. James was the second Laird of Pilrig, now a grimy district between Leith and Edinburgh, then pleasant fields set with young woods. The grandfather, also called James, was ruined by the Darien affair, and his son at first hesitated to take up the inheritance. He did so at last on his mother's persuasion, for the honour of the name; and as some compensation was afterwards paid, he came not badly out of the matter. The lad was minded to go abroad, but, paying a visit to the West before his departure, fell in love with handsome Louisa Hamilton, "the fair flower of Clydesdale." They made a match of it, and returned to Edinburgh on one horse, the bride on a pillion behind her "man"—a proceeding which you are sure had won the hearty approval of their descendant. The lady, by the way, was the great-grandaunt of Sir William Hamilton the philosopher. "Marry for love and work for siller," saith a cheerful old Scots proverb. Balfour worked and prospered as a Leith merchant or manufacturer, and in 1718 bought Pilrig from the then Lord Rosebery, and removed there with his family, including the subject of this little vignette, who

was born in 1705. He studied at Edinburgh and Leyden. Some letters by him from the latter place are preserved. They are correct and dutiful, but a little pretentious. *Horribile dictu!* this ancestor of the ingenious R. L. S. discovers distinct traces of the prig. In due time he was admitted an Advocate, and then was made treasurer to the Faculty. In 1748 he was appointed Sheriff-Substitute of Midlothian, a rival beating him for the post of Sheriff-Principal, "as it was well understood that Balfour would do his duty without advancement, which the other would not."

Virtue was presently rewarded, for in 1754 he was set in the chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh over the head of David Hume! In 1764 he was transferred to that of the Law of Nature and Nations. He published anonymously some *Philosophical Essays* directed against the writings of Hume and Lord Kames. Hume wrote a courteous letter to him, politely asking his name. He replied not less politely, and insisted on remaining anonymous; but by this time David Balfour's visit was an old story, for it is dated three years before the first professorship. He was "sensible and well-intentioned, but not a powerful thinker," says the learned and competent M'Cosh. There is a tradition that his lectures were "dreich," but the irreverent are apt so to regard all academic prelections. Sir Henry Moncreiff in his *Life of Dr. Erskine* has some nice things to say about him, and after his death, full of years and honour, in 1793, his daughter, Mrs. Gibson, thus

wrote: "He makes a great Blank, for he was a most respectable head." I should mention that in 1760 the Lyon King-of-Arms—being approached in a proper manner, no doubt—granted him a coat-of-arms. Extant portraits show him a handsome man with finely cut features. He was troubled with weak eyes; his wife had the same complaint so badly that she ultimately became blind. The lady was a daughter of Sir John Elphinstone of Logie. Balfour wrote much verse, "which remains in manuscript." Altogether, a reputable and well-doing citizen, if not so entertaining as certain of his contemporaries with whom R. L. S. has made us acquainted.

CHAPTER XI

ENGLISH SCENES AND INCIDENTS, LONDON

R. L. S. had not an intimate knowledge of England or even of London. He was often in the capital, but his visits were flying ones. He had no permanent residence, nor did he work there. Most English men of letters, from choice or necessity, keep up, through all their lives, an intimate touch with the capital, and the attraction of London is felt by people who are not literary. It is the great centre of the Empire's thought and activity. They feel themselves drawn to it by many charms. Their thoughts were not his. Edinburgh was the city of his affection; it remained without rival. Again, London is so vast and complex that you cannot grasp it as a whole. You become bewildered in the effort. You end by forming your own circle, and this is what the place means for you. This was true of R. L. S. A few streets in the West End, one or two restaurants in Soho, some intimate friends, chiefly members of the Savile Club, as Sir Sidney Colvin, W. E. Henley, Mr. Gosse, and a few others, were for him London and its folk. Those friends he might and did meet in other places. Their talk, you believe, was very

entertaining, and passed over a wide range of subject, but it was not talk about the town. Yet London is the theatre in which many of his characters play their parts. Even without local atmosphere, he felt here was the best scene for a fantastic tale.

It is significant that all his London stories are of his own time—that is, the Victorian era. He has given us a brilliant picture of mediaeval Paris in one short story, also much of eighteenth-century Edinburgh in two fairly long ones, but the romance of London's past had no attractions for him. He planned many works that he never completed or even began. No one of them dealt in any way with the capital. Let us run over the London stories he has written. *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and the short story called *Markheim* are altogether placed in the capital. *Markheim* has no local touch. You infer it is there from a chance reference: when there comes the knock at the door, the chief character desires "to plunge into a bath of London multitudes," so as to destroy any mark by which discovery were possible. Again, in the *Strange Case* there is a brief but admirable account of a London fog. Yet if you put it beside the huge canvases on which Dickens painted his London scenes, it is a puny sketch, very different, for instance, from the fog scene in *The Old Curiosity Shop* where Quilp meets his death. Again, it is but an episode, properly introduced, yet not essential in any way to the narrative. He might have put *Markheim* in Man-

chester and the *Strange Case* in Edinburgh without loss—nay, with some possible gain in the latter case, except that the nature of both stories makes a very large town best for their scene. And more so with *The New Arabian Nights*. That brilliant extravaganza, with its frequent touches of tragic farce, must be in the capital; it requires large spaces, movement among vast crowds and different classes, also the bringing together of a great variety of strange characters.

The topography of this and its continuation *The Dynamiter* is a little, but not much, invented. The tale starts in "an oyster bar in the immediate neighbourhood of Leicester Square." To the north is Soho, the French quarter, with its still distinctive features, especially in its byways. Here are quaint little restaurants and shops, strange tongues chatter in the streets, a strange mixed crew frequent it; thus it is pervaded with an air of dingy romance. One must remember that it is not now as when R. L. S. knew it best. In 1886 the wide street called Shaftesbury Avenue was driven right through the centre. It let in the full light of day on many a dark court and turning. The avenue is now one of the great highways of London traffic, and by it Soho was made less foreign, less mysterious, and more like the rest of London. The "small French restaurant in Soho" where the party had their supper before they proceeded to the premises of the Suicide Club was one of the old order. The club-house, however, was not in Soho, but in one of the streets east of Charing Cross

Station—Adam Street, Durham Street, Buckingham Street, or Villiers Street. Chepstow Place, Westbourne Grove, where Mr. Malthus lived, is skilfully picked out as a good middle-class neighbourhood in the West End, though beyond what is usually known as such. Trafalgar Square, with its broad spaces, its fountains, and its lions, is a suitable scene for the violent exit of the unfortunate gentleman. The club-house is placed in Box Court, a name so matter-of-fact that you are surprised to find London has no such spot, though there is a Box Street far in the East End. In the second story of *The Suicide Club*, the court, it is said, opens off the Strand, along which central thoroughfare the Prince was directed to proceed after he had drawn the fatal card. The streets which run from the Strand southward toward the Embankment have suffered many changes since Stevenson's time, but the Craven Hotel, Craven Street, is still a recognizable locality. It is here the Saratoga trunk with its horrid burden is taken by Cyrus Q. Scuddamore after his return from Paris. In Rochester House, Regent's Park, on the banks of the Canal, you have a very appropriate locality for the exciting events that conclude the narrative. As to Stockdove Lane in *The Rajah's Diamond*, if you wonder how Harry Hartley reaches this rustic and secluded quarter so speedily, you can only be assured that the lane is imaginary. At the end of the first series we learn that Prince Florizel is deposed "in consequence of his continued absence and edifying neglect of public business." In the

continuation we are introduced to a tobacconist's shop in Rupert Street, Soho. It is of the most orthodox type, the door "flanked with gigantic Highlanders of wood." This is "the Bohemian Cigar Divan by T. Goddall," under which name our magnificent King in exile is masquerading.

The place is well chosen. It is named from Prince Rupert of the Rhine, son of Frederick, the unfortunate King of Bohemia, and his wife Elizabeth, called "the Queen of Hearts," and daughter of James I. It dates from 1667. In Stevenson's time it ran into Great Crown Court, but it is one of the ways opened up by Shaftesbury Avenue, which cuts across it, to the destruction of its secluded air. Some twenty years ago it held an Italian restaurant called the "Solferino," a favourite haunt of Henley and the band of contributors whom he had gathered round him. Nor was it unknown to R. L. S. Its Chianti remains a fragrant memory with all its frequenters, and up to the very last, though by no means particularly cheap, its meats and drinks were particularly good. The street was the very scene for the impossible apotheosis of the delightfully impossible Prince. The Divan serves as the connecting link, for there is no other between the two series of *The New Arabian Nights*; but not even the most pronounced Stevensonian has ever tried to identify the exact site. The street is alleged by the Prince to be "the strategic centre of the universe," and as such we must take it.

Somerset tells us that a select society at the "Cheshire Cheese" engaged his evenings. This, as

most Londoners know, is a tavern of some antiquity in Wine Office Court in Fleet Street, with a hazy and rather unreliable Johnsonian tradition. It has a genuine Bohemian appearance, and is much frequented by gentlemen of the press and societies like the Rhymers' Club. A number of London localities are mentioned, but no purpose could be served by going over them in detail. They are places like Leicester Square, the Marble Arch, the Embankment, Hyde Park, the great railway stations, perfectly well known by name at any rate to those who have never been in London. Their mention shows a lack of intimate knowledge rather than anything else. It may be noted that the superfluous mansion is situated in "the square which I will here call Golden Square, though that is not its name." Why it is not is very obvious. This was the house which was hired for the evening's entertainment which preceded the duel in the first part, and it could not have been so near the heart of London or Colonel Brackenbury would have got to it in much less time, and through far other scenery than that described in the adventure of the hansom cabs. The final scene is again in the Cigar Divan, which has become the strategic centre of the story. Here the characters meet and their futures are comfortably arranged. The street nomenclature in *Jekyll and Hyde* may also be dismissed with a word. The locality of the house in the episode of the Door is not mentioned, though I believe Stevenson meant to place it in one of the streets to the north of Theobald's Road. Mr.

Utterson the lawyer lives in Gaunt Street. The roll of London ways bears no such name, though Ganton Street, Golden Square, may have suggested it. Mr. Hyde lives appropriately enough in Soho. Again, the ordinary London localities are introduced frequently in *The Wrong Box*, but they do not merit notice. This may be mentioned: if you appreciate Stevenson's fondness for peculiar names and his quaint turn of humour, you will see that he would not write much about London without introducing the Isle of Dogs. Joseph Finsbury was honorary president of the Working Men's Mutual Improvement Society, Isle of Dogs, by whom the paper read by him was received with a "literal ovation." The "Isle," though so called for centuries, was in fact a peninsula till the West India Dock Canal cut it off from the left bank of the Thames, where it is situated just off Deptford and Greenwich. It is a commonplace, hard-working locality, with an ancient, obscure history. The quaint name is derived no one can say exactly how. An old legend tells of a murdered man and the discovery of the murderer by a faithful hound. Others, again, affirm that when Greenwich was a royal seat our Princes had the kennels for their dogs on this marsh, and their incessant barking got the place the name. Pepys has a note of a night spent in a coach here. For the story of the frolic, you must consult his entertaining page. Another reference is to "the Halls of Nicol and Verrey." These are the two well-known restaurants, the first on the south-east and the other on the north-west

side of Regent Street. Since Stevenson's day a number of huge hotels and restaurants have sprung up in London: the Ritz, the Carlton, the Cecil, the Savoy—to name but these. The ones he mentions which still deservedly flourish have now an air of almost venerable antiquity. The Café Royal, founded by the late M. Nicol and his wife, is an exact reproduction of a French café. It has a long tradition of eminent French exiles when such men were a feature in London life. The original Verrey was a confectioner; his cakes and tarts were distributed to the public by his daughter, a young lady of such remarkable beauty that the street was blocked by her admirers. The block became a nuisance until the charmer was packed off to the country, whereat the crowd dissolved. Such is the story preserved in the pages of a Law Report. One of the political reformers of the Georgian era charged with causing crowds in Regent Street by his exhibits more or less pertinently asked why Mr. Verrey had not been prosecuted for a like offence. By a natural process of evolution, the confectioner's shop became the restaurant as we know it.

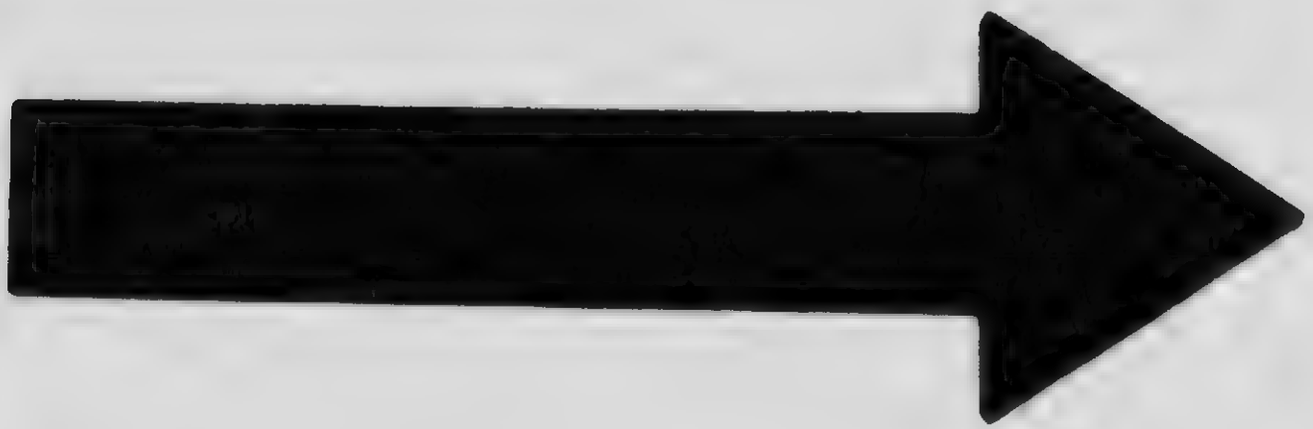
Some aspects of London impressed R. L. S. Here he produces and reflects on them. The fog, as already noted, is one. Even this has suffered change. As powerful, malignant demon it has well-nigh vanished since his day, and to a new generation will soon be but a tradition. Also he dwells on the long empty streets of late night or early morning, brilliantly lighted as if for a pro-

cession, and yet vacant of human life. And again those streets in the early summer dawn, quiet, though the houses that line them be packed with human beings. Again the mystery of London holds him: the huge crowds made up of separate individualities, with their separate lives and their infinite variety of destinies. Such ideas, whether trite or novel, are eminently the ideas of the intelligent stranger, not of the native and the citizen. We have a note on the "fine and grey old quarter of Bloomsbury, roared about on every side by the high tides of London, but itself rejoicing in romantic silences and city peace." This is the observer from a foreign land, though that observer must be R. L. S. to put his results so choicely and well. There is a want of intimate touch in everything R. L. S. writes about London. He is never the lover; he writes always of the outside and from the outside.

CHAPTER XII

ENGLISH SCENES AND INCIDENTS, THE PROVINCES

IF R. L. S. was not greatly interested in London he was still less so in provincial England. It is the points of difference with Scotland that impress him. In South Britain he notes the settled look of everything, the abodes of ancient peace, the warm red of the brick houses, the flatness of the country, the windmills whirling in the breeze, the slow and orderly habits of the people. Their lack of emotion chills him, their speech is insipid and vague. In contrast he comments on the theological character of the Scots peasant; he quotes, not for the first time, the beginning of the Catechisms of the two Churches: prosaic and practical, that of England demands your name; you start in the Scots version with the attributes of Deity. Again, he will have the older Southern Universities mere "rotten boroughs of the Arts." The bare and Spartan Scots College shows forth a nobler ideal. You had thought that for a writer of his wide culture and charm Oxford had been a place of profound fascination, and that he would have drawn pictures of singular beauty with such a subject, but it is not so. He comments on the



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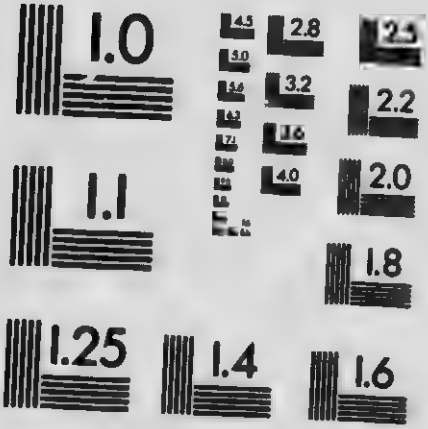

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fact that Highlander and Lowlander regard each other as " brither Scots," whilst they look on folk to the south of the border-line well-nigh as foreigners. Yet the Lowlander is much nearer in blood and speech and manner of life to the Northumbrian than he is to the Highlander.

Provincial England is the scene of much that he has written. The roads and the inns attract him most, because he was a wanderer by choice and habit. The pageant of the Great North Road of the early years of the last century is set forth in the fragment of that name, as also in *St. Ives*. On it or its likes the mails do sixty miles a day, the chaises whisk after the bobbing post-boys, the young blood dashes past in a curricle and tandem, and there are huge slow-pacing wagons, with the music of their bells. Finally there is the motley array of travellers on foot. Again, the tavern sentiment is strong in him as in many great writers—in Shakespeare, Dr. Johnson, Scott, to take but three. As he wrote many tales of travel, his page must be dotted with inns, but he gets his characters into them on every occasion. He dwells on their attractions with an almost physical pleasure. Thus in *St. Ives* there is the inn at Bedford to which he conducts Dudgeon, the lawyer's clerk. " The white table napery, the bright crystal, the reverberation of the fire, the red curtains, the Turkey carpet, the portraits in the coffee-room with the placid faces of their two or three late guests," together with a " glass of excellent light dry port," are compensation for the misadventures of the night. The " Green Dragon " at

Aylesbury and the inn at Kirkby Lonsdale play important parts in this story, so do the sign of "The Rising Sun" at Kettley and the "Goat and Bagpipes" at Shoreby in *The Black Arrow*. Much of the early action of *Treasure Island* takes place in the "Admiral Benbow," the inn on the coast road in Devon. Also John Silver is first introduced to us as a retired seaman, who had lost a leg under the immortal Hawke, and now keeps "The Spy Glass," a tavern in Bristol for the refreshment of nautical men. In the *Body-Snatcher* there is an elaborate account of "The George" at Debenham, an old-fashioned place, with its wide oak staircase, the Turkey rug at the bottom, the light upon the stair, and the warm radiance of the bar-room window.

Of his individual works *The Black Arrow* is concerned with the Wars of the Roses of the time of Henry VI. It is all in provincial England, and most of the scenery is laid in the Forest, but it is a property forest. There is no genuine touch, nor anything that truly smacks of the period. Torches flame in iron holders, the walls are covered with arras, the floors are rust-bescattered, we have pictures of life under the greenwood tree, the mediaeval law of sanctuary is introduced, but all are mere external properties. The language is wittily described by R. L. S. himself as "tushery." He invented the word, or more probably took it from Henley, who had remarkable skill in the coining of such phrases, witness his "Kailyard School," that admirable description of the "mob of gentlemen" who write with anything but ease sentimental novels

of Scots lower-class country life. Obviously the language for a romance like *The Black Arrow* is difficult to hit. You would not, if you could, make it genuine. The average reader could not follow, for he is "stumped" by Chaucer, and even the specialist in English could scarce write in Chaucer's dialect. Practically the author invariably gives a sort of sham mediaeval air to the piece by such phrases as "grammercy," "by the mass," "y'are," "an he go," or by addressing a letter thus: "To the most untrue gentylman Sir David Brackley Knyght—These—So much I like you to wit." Scott followed something of this plan, and that so skilfully that the average reader probably enjoys it. In his *Letters* R. L. S. makes unmerciful fun of "tushery," and he never repeated the experiment. Under unfavourable conditions the force of his genius produces ever and again striking passages. Thus the character and appearance of Richard Crookback, Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III, are drawn with powerful touches. You seem to get nearer the man than you do elsewhere, even in Shakespeare. He is a lad slightly deformed in that one shoulder is higher than the other; his face is pale and distorted, the eyes clear and bold; he speaks in sneering, cruel tones, and makes a gesture of dangerous nobility. In battle his face is pale as linen, his eyes shine like some strange jewel. At the sight of carnage he smiles upon one side, as if to conceal his pleasure in the horrors of battle. He is a fearsome lad, and Dick, the hero, has a great terror and some hatred of him.

In *St. Ives* English incidents that took the fancy of R. L. S., though he had only read and could not have seen them, are introduced. Thus there is the funeral of a suicide at midnight where four cross-roads meet, a stake is driven through the body. Now a man who wilfully murders himself is guilty of felony. At the time of the story, if the coroner's jury brought in a verdict of *felo de se*, the goods of the suicide were forfeit, and his lands went to the Crown, or very often to the lord of the manor in which they were situate. He was denied Christian burial, and popular custom had added the other cruel rites there described. Again, as St. Ives is nearing the border on his return to Edinburgh, he encounters the charming Dorothy Greensleeves proceeding with a half-bred Hawbuck named Bellamy to make a runaway marriage at Gretna Green. It is a neatly conceived episode. Those marriages, though no doubt they appear in fiction out of all proportion to their number in fact, were features of English life between 1753 and 1856—that is, for just over a century. At the former date Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act put a stop to speedy and irregular unions in England, but according to Scots law the consent of the parties constitutes a marriage, so loving English couples had only to cross the border when any form of ceremony made them man and wife. The famous blacksmith of Gretna Green only gave effect to the marriage by supplying evidence of it. Lord Brougham's Act in 1856 required residence of one of the parties at any rate for twenty-one days in Scotland, else

were the nuptials altogether void, so the business came suddenly to an end.

In the last passages of *The Wrecker* we have wanderings in rural England. There is a very charming account of Stalbridge Minster, an imaginary name, but a very pretty picture of an English country village seen through American spectacles. The church is so big that it dwarfs "the domino of tiled houses, and walled gardens." Also "through the sally port of every street there flowed in from the country a silent invasion of green grass." Bees and birds are the most prominent inhabitants; hives are in every garden, and nests of swallows plastered on every house. Here again some important action takes place in the "Carthew Arms" at Stalbridge-le-Carthew. In the *Story of a Lie* I note a charming picture of an upland scene, but it is not like the last, local.

If we turn to speech and character, we find much for comment. The dialect, even when not "tushery," is not English of any sort or kind. Thus the English landladies in *St. Ives* are mere lay figures. Rowley the servant is elaborated with some care. You laugh because he says and does amusing things, but I think him an impossible person, and his speech impossible. His best English provincial scenes are those in the first part of *Treasure Island*. Life on the Western seaboard, with the country squires and professional men and labourers and seafaring folk, is adequately portrayed. Blind old Pew, that humorous and sardonic villain, is of himself enough to give a touch of real life and

motion to a far less gorgeous tale. I do not say that R. L. S. was unable to understand English character, it was rather that he was not sufficiently interested to apply himself to the study, which was a necessary preliminary to accurate description. He puts a telling phrase into the mouth of one of his Scots characters. He plainly shows how he relishes the phrase as he writes it down; he understands the nature from which the thought comes. I do not find the same accurate touch in his Englishman. There is one exception; oddly enough, it is in a South Sea romance. Huish in *The Ebb Tide* is a marvellous type of a criminal Cockney, vulgar, cruel, mean. He is not altogether contemptible, for he has courage, daring, and even a certain low humour. Perhaps he divined the character, perhaps it was drawn from rascal vagabond types he had experienced on South Sea beaches; possibly it was both. There was a certain piquancy in showing forth the man in strange contrast with his surroundings. The dialect he talks is at least sufficiently accurate. Of its own kind this is a masterpiece of the dark and the ugly.

In an earlier part of this book I have had occasion to mention the Hawes Inn at Queensferry. In the essay called *A Gossip on Romance* there is grouped with it the inn at Burford Bridge near Dorking, "with its arbors and green garden and silent eddying river." It is charmingly situated, with its background of high cliff, its frontage of water. As Stevenson notes, "here Keats wrote some of his *Endymion* and Nelson parted from his Emma."

I may add that it was an abode of Hazlitt, and for some time of R. L. S. himself. Here he met George Meredith, a writer for whom he and Henley had a whole-hearted admiration. To him they dedicated *Beau Austin*. The old-time inn must have been a much humbler affair than the splendid modern hotel which now bears the name, and the older house was no doubt the more picturesque if less luxurious. However, this is the only mention that R. L. S. makes of it.

With one place in provincial England R. L. S. was very intimately concerned. He lived at Bournemouth from September 1884 to August 1887, when he left for America, never again to visit these shores. Apart from his father's house it was the only home he ever had in this country. He was driven to it by ill-health. After some time in lodgings, he and his wife removed to a house in Branksome Park called "Bonallie Towers," which name sounds like a parody of Bonaly Tower on the northern slope of the Pentlands in the R. L. S. home country. Then, in 1885, Thomas Stevenson gave his daughter-in-law a house which they named "Skerryvore," after the lighthouse on a reef ten miles south-west of Tiree. It was in the way of vessels going either to the Clyde or the Mersey, and set amidst miles of dangerous seas and battered by the mighty waves of the Atlantic. It was begun in 1838, and six years were consumed in its construction. It was planned and carried out by Alan Stevenson, the uncle of R. L. S. and the father of his cousin and most intimate friend, R. A. M. S.

It was one of the proudest achievements of the Stevenson family, and you see how appropriate the name.

> For love of lovely words, and for the sake
> Of those, my kinsmen and my countrymen,
> Who early and late in the windy ocean toiled
> To plant a star for seamen, where was then
> The surfy haunt of seals and cormorants:
> I, on the lintel of this cot, inscribe
> The name of a strong tower.

The house is on the edge of Hallam Chine. Those chines, which are characteristic features of that coast, are gullies running some way into the land. It is two-storied, built of brick, with a slated roof—the conventional, good-class seaside residence. The front is southward and not to the road, also the gardens stretch over the edge and some way down the chine. In summer it is bright with flowers and grasses; moreover, there are many charming nooks, even though its ways be narrow. In Stevenson's time the spacious "blue room," as he called the dining-room, was adorned with portraits of his friends, while such of them as were artists had painted and otherwise decorated the panels in the entrance hall.

R. L. S. did not find the health for which he came. He was nearly always ill, and very much confined to bed, yet he worked steadily and continuously, and with some measure of cheerfulness. He sometimes left home for other places in England, chiefly London. Once he got as far as Paris, but he broke down and had to scurry back. As all the world

knows, invalids are the staple industry of Bournemouth. The place is sheltered and warm, and the air of its pine woods delightful and beneficial, so there is a large floating population of sick folk catered for by the remainder of the inhabitants. R. L. S. had no association with the life of the place, which he describes in *The Wrong Box* as "that unchartered wilderness of villas." Sir Henry Taylor with his family, Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, and some others of kindred nature were his intimates, but they themselves were not bound up or identified with the town. His London friends, as Sir Sidney Colvin, Henley, Henry James, J. S. Sargent, his cousin R. A. M. S., visited from time to time, but they were birds of passage. In *The Wrong Box* Bournemouth is briefly touched on. Joseph Finsbury is taken there according to the direction of Sir Faraday Bond, the medical baronet. Joseph walks in Branksome woods and reflects on the tontine, and presently the three Finsburys depart from the East Station, and there is no more of Bournemouth. Perhaps there would not have been as much had not the piece been drafted by Lloyd Osbourne his stepson, who also collaborated in *The Wrecker* and *The Ebb Tide*. He had been at school there, and he naturally introduced a place he knew so well; probably he was more impressed than was his stepfather, and nowhere else does R. L. S. use Bournemouth as literary material.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME FRENCH PASSAGES

"HE was always happy in France." So said W. E. Henley of our author. He had a real affection for the country as well as an educated Scots comprehension for and interest in the people. He found everything more sympathetic than in England. Also he understood better. He liked what was odd and picturesque and quaint. And he found it here. He was emotional, in strange sudden ways. His French company rose to the occasion as the stolid Saxon never did. Most of all was the attraction of the literature. He found writers of his own way of thinking and working. With them good expression was an end in itself. He admired the constant effort to say what was to be said in the best possible manner. Though not a painter, he was a sketcher. He understood something about pictures, and the life of the art student in the Paris studio was pleasing to him. It is well pictured in *The Wrecker*. He knew Paris better than London, not merely modern Paris but the Paris of former days. The mediaeval town is admirably presented in *A Lodging for the Night*. The sketch is as deftly done though of necessity slighter than Victor Hugo's elaborate picture in

his famous *Notre Dame* romance. Also in France he was recognized as Bohemian, and treated with easy tolerance. A Bohemian sober and well-mannered might seem impossible in Edinburgh and difficult in London: R. L. S. was this. He was the exception, that it may be proved the rule for his own country. But he was no exception in France, where there were others like him. Yet they were painters and not writers. He knew men who were already or afterwards became famous in the world of art. None, it seems, who was to be great in the world of letters. It may be because of his fondness for the gipsy-life of the road and the forest. Such was useful, nay necessary, for the painter who worked from nature. It was usually impossible for the man of letters. Many people lived at Siron's to paint, but none to write, except R. L. S. himself.

His connection with "the forest," by which he meant Fontainebleau, was intimate. It is a huge tract—about forty thousand English acres. Here is the most beautiful woodland scenery—beeches, elms, oaks, huge clumps of black firs; also, like our own New Forest, it is not continuous wood. Much is covered with heath and broom, whilst across it there run some eight or ten ridges of gaunt sandstone. These diverse elements give picturesque touches to the scenery. Once deer abounded, and the old French kings hunted them on many a bright morning long years ago. These same deer are rare to-day, but the dead and gone monarchs have left substantial trace of their presence, for in

1162 they built a castle, and we still have the famous Château, a hunting seat of a superb description. It is right in the centre of the forest. A town speedily grew up round it, which is to-day one of the most famous outlying suburbs of Paris, thirty-seven miles off by rail. It is a clean, pleasant place, and its numerous villas are extensively occupied by retired, well-to-do Parisians, who like a touch of the country, though they would not have it too prominent.

A number of much less pretentious villages and hamlets came in time to dot the outskirts of the forest, wher of the chief in renown and chief in the eyes of St enson was Barbizon, on the western outskirts and so south-east of Paris. Here was Siron's, his constant place of residence, of whose quaint ways he has giv so charming an account in his essay called *Fon nebleau*. R. L. S. has spoken with some scorn of the Vie de Bohème of which Murger is the classic chronicler or historian. Life in the Latin Quarter was a bright vision in the young days of many of us, and perhaps it once approached the reality. At least one loves to think so, but it must have been nearly a hundred years ago, for to-day there is no more dreary and sordid place in all Paris than the Pays Latin, artificial and cheap, save in one or two places, and save for some gallant memories. Barbizon was to have a like fate. Perhaps Louis saw it in its best days. Perhaps he himself was its Murger; at any rate, the Bohemian life of which he tells has suffered dire change. Parisian families crowd it for their

spring or autumn outing, spite of the flies and mosquitoes which rise from its tracts of sandy soil. There is a lack of grass and water, yet the road to the forest is lined with villas. There is sufficient number of more or less attractive hotels. The available space in some of them bears a great variety of painting, placed thereon by artists grateful, or indebted. But the artist now seeks a quieter spot. The life is dear, and even to some extent fashionable, from the spendthrifts and gay bucks "qui s'y installent en galante compagnie."

This was not the Barbizon that R. L. S. knew from 1875 onward. It was a genuine art centre. There are traces of the place in 808 A.D., but it lived its slow village-life for centuries without notice, for it was only about 1830 that artists began specially to affect it. We have what is called the "Barbizon School," whose principle was, in contrast with earlier and more artificial methods, to paint direct from nature, after the fashion of our own Constable. Rousseau, Diaz, and Millet lived here for many years, and Corot and Daubigny were frequent visitors. "If you could see how beautiful the forest is," said Millet; "it is so calm, with such a terrible grandeur, that I feel myself really afraid of it." Such was the spirit with which those great men approached their work; perhaps something of it was still present in the minds of the horde of painters of many nationalities who crowded there year after year. Théodore Rousseau and Millet are buried hard by. Their memorial, a plaque in bronze, is also near. Millet had just died when

R. L. S. got there in 1875, and incessant discussion of his work and genius was the topic of every day. His pictures had that exasperating fortune that falls to the works of great artists. He must sell them for a trifle, and work hard to live; and now they fetch enormous sums, whilst everyone knows "The Angelus," "The Sower," "The Gleaner," to name but these. Mr. W. H. Low tells how he took R. A. M. S., Stevenson's cousin "Bob," to see Millet. It was after a discussion as to the lack of originality in our own time, and after they left "Bob" turned to his companion and asked if he thought it fair in a discussion on minor poets "to spring Shakespeare upon your opponent."

The artists kept Siron's for themselves with jealous care, so that when R. L. S. went, it must have been an ideal artist's barracks. It was built in a rambling fashion round the courtyard, and additions were run up as occasion required. It was fairly on the street, into which the windows of the dining-room looked. The wood panelling had in course of time become filled with the work of generations of artists. As night fell the generation in possession strolled in from the forest or wherever they were working. There was a delightful and profitable hour of talk before dinner. *Apéritifs* were consumed, whilst the work of the day was freely criticized. Then followed a simple but prolonged meal, during which and after which, till late into the night, the stream of talk kept on, till at some unknown hour the company broke up, some to their rooms in the hotel, later comers,

crowded out, so to speak, across the way up to the houses of peasants. The next morning there was milk and coffee in the arbour or the great room, followed by the long day in the forest, an arduous day, yet filled with its own consolations and pleasures.

R. L. S. mentions other places on the outskirts of the forest where there were like communities. In fact, every hamlet did what it could to fill its houses with painters. The francs received for rooms, for food, for posing as models, were of the first importance to the frugal French peasant. The charge at Siron's was five francs per day, *vin ordinaire* for dinner at any rate presumably included. About four shillings is a small price, marvellous it seems in American and English eyes, yet it was really only ordinary rates. Ten years later I fared sumptuously in an hotel at Blois for six francs, and that, even at the seaside and even in the holiday months, was a few years ago the common rate, but the Continental peoples travel nowadays as they never travelled before. Prices, especially in August, the great holiday month in France, and especially at the seaside, have gone up with leaps and bounds. It may or may not give an additional charm to Stevenson's bright pictures that they show forth an extinct order of things, but such is the fact, as the Stevensonian who makes his pilgrimage to Barbizon speedily discovers.

Grez is next after Barbizon in note. It is a hamlet eight miles or so from Fontainebleau, to the south of and a little distance from the forest. It is

on the Loing, a tributary of the Seine. Here was afterwards a regular colony of American painters, but this was not yet. The Stevensons were among the first of the English-speaking crew that invaded the forest and its precincts. American colonists and lady students of art were yet hid in the future. Here is a picturesque bridge of the fifteenth century which you are not surprised to learn has been painted by almost every artist who ever sought the place, "a low bridge of many arches choked with sedge." The hamlet has also the splendid red ruins of a keep, the sole remains of a castle built by La Reine Blanche, the mother of St. Louis. The Stevensons and some of their friends crossed over here from Barbizon in a moment of disgust, in order that they might enjoy the bathing and the walks by the river. They put up at the Hôtel Chevillon, with which they were well content, though their dream of an earthly paradise was not realized. "A pretty and very melancholy village," writes R. L. S. to his mother, and he goes on to speak of "its atmosphere of sadness and slackness."

Grez is memorable in his life, for here he met the lady who became Mrs. Stevenson. It is noteworthy also as the original of the town described in the *Treasure of Franchard*, and the inn in fact had the fate which is there given to the doctor's house. The original of Anastasie was taken from Barbizon. She was Madame La Chèvre, wife of a French painter who lived there. We go back to Grez for the originals of Monsieur Léon Berthelini and his spouse Elvira in *Providence and the Guitar*. These were a

wandering French actor and his Bulgarian wife, who had passed some time in the village. R. L. S. sent them the money he got for the story which they never saw, and could not have read if they had.

So much for Paris and the suburbs of or at any rate the country about Paris. R. L. S. relates his adventures in the provinces in *An Inland Voyage* and *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*. I give some supplementary notes. The Cevennes form the greatest of the mountain ranges of the south of France. They are the fringe of the central plateau of that country. Their shape is a half-moon with the convex towards the Loire River. Though the name is applied to the whole mountainous tract, the Cevennes proper lie between Cairon and Larzac. Here is the wildest and most tangled part. The Cevennes separate two climates, two opposed aspects of nature. To the north and west is a land of rain and snow. Yet the meadows rich and fruitful give a bountiful return to the incessant, steady labour of the peasant. To the south and east there is the hot sun, tracts of sterile desert, or in other places the vine and the olive.

R. L. S. meant to go from Le Monastier to Alais on the Gardon, a tributary of the Rhone, but he finished at St. Jean du Gard. Here he sold his donkey the famous Modestine, which he had bought at the starting-place to carry his "traps." He had been twelve days on the journey, had come over a hundred and twenty miles over all sorts of roads, along valleys, over "several respectable ridges," and across many more or less famous streams

and rivers. He made no attempt to explore the Cevennes. It is a land of wild and strange beauty, of remarkable and even savage scenery. But he left the most severely alone, and came through parts that were comparatively tame, though he invests them with a strange charm. He gives us no hint why he made this singular tour. He spent a month in Le Monastier, then apparently determined to rejoin the railway system and ordinary life at Alais, thus the journey between was his plunge into the wilderness. He came near some of the beauty spots. One chapter is entitled *In the Valley of the Tarn*. Now the gorges of the Tarn are the places which a tourist in the Cevennes would go to see, would "do" conscientiously from end to end; but R. L. S. didn't and in fact couldn't, given his whimsical mode of travel. A man with a donkey yet unaccustomed to donkey-driving must take roads without any real difficulty about them. He did practically without guides, without boats or horses, without the all-powerful aid of steam.

He went alone. In his essay on *Walking Tours* he says you must go alone. If you go with a friend you turn the thing into a picnic. This s[illegible]ement needs analysis and distinction. If you g[illegible]nerely for pleasure you are better with a friend to support the solitude, to laugh with you at the humours of the road, to help you to meet the rubs of fate. But then you think of the country only in a far-off way. It is not the centrepiece. It is merely decoration to the theatre of your action. Alone you are completely under the influence of the

places and the peoples. Each minute has fresh experiences and fresh sensations. Your tour is one long observation. Thus if you walk to write, you must walk alone. And then the solitude in which most of the day is passed leads you to appreciate the company at the end or the chance talk by the wayside. You are more eager to cultivate casual intercourse. To put it plainly, vulgarly, you get "copy" at every turn of the road, from every remark at the table of the village inn.

Those twelve days were not eventful. There was nothing startling or sensational that happened either in the weather or in the people. Nor did the traveller seek to create incidents; an ordinary "bagman" or reporter had made things "hum" to a much greater extent. This is the most remarkable tribute to the power of the writer. R. L. S. has written many fascinating pages, but none more so than those of this little book. Is it the charm of style? Partly so, still more the human sympathy, the humour, the pathos that makes the ordinary incidents of the ordinary day peculiarly fascinating.

Some of Stevenson's admirers have followed, and no doubt still follow, the track of their author in the Cevennes. One of them, Mr. J. A. Hammerton, has recorded his experiences in an interesting volume. He went the round twenty-five years after, and from first to last found no human being who remembered the passage of the man with his donkey. Surely Father Apollinaris, you suggest. But Father Apollinaris had been dead five years,

and though faithful Mr. Hammerton spent a night at the monastery "Our Lady of the Snows," he records no scrap of personal reminiscence from any of the inmates. He tells us that the place is well called, for in winter it lies buried for weeks under "une neige énorme," as one of the monks said with a shudder.

At Pont de Montvert Mr. Hammerton was at least successful in tracing the after-history of Clarisse of the Hôtel des Cevennes, the maid of the inn on whose rustic charms R. L. S. has dwelt with some detail. Nay, he has embellished his page with an authentic portrait of that damsel, but it is, alas! contemporary with his and not with his author's visit, so he has done rather faithfully than wisely. True, the later life of Clarisse was entirely creditable. She was married and had a family, but the twenty-five years are "chiels that winna ding," as Robin has it. And you think as Scott did when he met Clarinda in later life, that she has few remains of her ancient beauty. Mr. Hammerton got his information from the Protestant pastor, a well-read and highly intelligent person, though rather too advanced for his visitor's tastes. He was there in the time of R. L. S., but knew nothing of him until he read his works, of which he proved himself an eager student. Through him Clarisse, who also had no memory of the traveller, had learned that she herself had some place in letters.

It was at Pont de Montvert that the slaughter of du Chayla, "Archpriest of the Cevennes and Inspector of Missions," and his companions, the

central tragedy of the Camisard wars, took place. Florac and Alais are, R. L. S. assures us, the capitals of the country of the Camisards, and that at Cassagnas you are in its very heart. Spite of which, it seems, he only touched its outskirts. For him the past religious history of the country had a powerful attraction, possibly from its similarity to the struggles of the Scots Covenanters. Beside referring to it again and again, he has given a detailed and picturesque account of the business at Pont de Montvert. The Cevennes have been from an early period the home of those who sought religious freedom. The Albigenses of the thirteenth century had numerous adherents in this wide tract of country. They aimed at a return to primitive Christianity, and though their enemies said they denied the verities of the Christian faith, that was only the bigots' "pretty way." They or their likes were condemned at a Council of Pope Calixtus II held at Toulouse in 1119. Thence they were known as Toulouse heretics. Their later name came from Albigois in Languedoc, now the department of the Tarn, the point to which a crusade of Pope Innocent III (1209) against them was directed. In the course of this Béziers was taken, and a massacre ensued of the inhabitants from twenty to forty thousand in number. Sound Catholics were spared as little as heretics. "Kill them all!" said Arnold, Abbot of Citeaux, the Papal Legate, in an outburst of cynical bigotry; "God will know His own." Resistance was quelled by the year 1229. The Inquisition took charge of the heretics, of whom

there were numerous executions at the stake, then we hear no more.

When Louis XIV revoked the Edict of Nantes in 1685, a stubborn remnant remained in the Cevennes, and for some time held the King and all his forces at defiance. The cruelties of the Abbé du Chayla stirred up the people against him, and led to his murder on the 24th July 1702 at Pont de Montvert, as already noted. Some terrible years followed. In 1703 Marshal Montrevel traversed the country with sixty thousand men. Himself had been a Huguenot, and had all the bitter zeal of the renegade. Four hundred and thirty villages were destroyed, and a vast number of inhabitants killed or executed. This led to savage reprisals. In the diocese of Nîmes alone eighty-four priests were strangled, and over two hundred churches burned. Jean Cavalier was the most skilled leader of the insurgents, and he had many notable successes. In April 1704 Marshal Villars succeeded Montrevel. He inaugurated a new policy. The prisoners were released on taking the oath of allegiance, a free pardon was the reward of all who surrendered, whilst those taken in arms were shot without further question. Both sides were for the moment heartily tired of the struggle. Cavalier presently made terms. His life before and after had strange ups and downs. He entered the British service and ended as Governor of Jersey. Next year there was a partial revival of trouble owing to the unwise conduct of the Duke of Berwick, who succeeded Villars in command. But the King's forces were now too strong to resist.

The Camisards in appearance submitted, or they followed the example of Cavalier and entered the British service.

There are various derivations of the word Camisard, but the one that seems to carry most weight is that which traces it from the *camise* or blouse worn by the peasants. Such is a bare skeleton of the story whereof so many picturesque details are given in the *Travels*. R. L. S. notes the numerous Protestant section of the folk, and how peacefully they live with their Catholic neighbours. The moral he preaches is the uselessness of persecution, since here great bodies of Protestants are in evidence to the present day. We need not too curiously examine the theory he propounds. We know that the nascent Reformation was crushed in Italy and Spain, as well as in France, and you suspect that the mutual tolerance shown by Protestant and Papist is due first of all to the lack of profound religious conviction in the mind of the average Frenchman, be he of the town or the country, of the ancient or the reformed faith.

I do not discuss whether the mediaeval touches in *The Sire de Maletroit's Door* are true or false. This about a name is curious. The former lover of the heroine Blanche was called Champdivers, which is the name assumed by the hero in *St. Ives* whilst a prisoner in the Castle. "It was my mother's name and good to go soldiering with," he explains.

CHAPTER XIV

R. L. S. ON THE CONTINENT

I TURN to the *Inland Voyage*, of which all the interesting and important parts are in France. R. L. S. and his friend went on canoes over rivers and canals some way in the north, through scenery not specially noteworthy. Here as in the other journey the book relies for its interest on the charming manner in which the ordinary incidents of the day are set forth, and the quaint and humorous reflections to which they give rise. I pick out one or two points of interest. The travellers cross the frontier by train to Mauberg. It is a place on both banks of the Sambre, a fortress of the first class in the middle of the French Black Country. The weather was bad, and to an ordinary mind the prospect not enchanting. From first to last there were no travellers for pleasure except themselves. They were taken for pedlars, nay possibly for lunatics. At some places they were well entertained. One of them was Landrecies. On the way to it they touched the forest of Mormal. "Alas! the forest of Mormal is only a little bit of a wood, and it was but for a little way that we skirted by its boundaries." R. L. S. saw one corner. The forest in fact totals up to the respectable amount of 23,000

acres, more than half the size of Fontainebleau, which is 41,500.

The voyage is a frank and amusing record of his impressions. Thus of Landrecies, which is another fortified town, "the only public buildings which had any interest for us were the hotel and the café, but we visited the church. There lies Marshal Clarke. But as neither of us had ever heard of that military hero we bore the associations of the spot with fortitude." The student of Napoleon knows Clarke very well. He flourished between 1765 and 1818. He was one of those men who stopped just below the very first rank, so him the general reader is likely to miss, partly because his name is not "kenspeckle," to use an expressive Scots phrase. Yet he was in his time a big person with a string of high-sounding titles, a Count and Duke under Napoleon, and a Peer and Marshal of France under the restored Bourbons; also he was Minister of War to both of them. He was opposed to Lord Chatham in the unlucky Walcheren expedition. It was largely owing to his skill and strategy that the affair was for us such a melancholy fiasco. Though he was against his old master in the Hundred Days, Napoleon spoke well of him at St. Helena. He was born and buried here. Hence no doubt the reason of his monument. A yet more eminent Frenchman had his origin in this town, Joseph Dupleix to wit (1697–1764), that Governor of the French possessions in India who fought so well for his country, though in the end with no profit to it or himself, for he was beaten by the greater

genius of Clive. There is now a statue to him by Fagel, but it only dates from 1888, whereas the voyage started in August 1876.

Mr. Hammerton followed this route in 1904, twenty-eight years afterwards. He made diligent inquiries as to the travellers, but in only two places did he find any memory of them. Here the landlord of the "Tête d'Or" gave with much assurance various details about them which were possibly accurate. At any rate, the Juge de Paix who entertained them so handsomely was still in office, though as he was now married there were no more pleasant bachelor supper-parties. He is described by Stevenson as "a functionary as far as I can make out of the character of a Scots Sheriff-Substitute," which is so far true since that official is a sort of Scots legal maid-of-all-work. His French brother has, however, as his name implies, no criminal jurisdiction. To finish with Landrecies, it is a town of about 4000 folk, and though both Mr. Hammerton and his author speak slightingly of its commerce, yet among its industries are breweries, tanneries, printing-works, dye-works, and glass-works.

The other place where a memory of the voyagers lingered was at La Fère "of cursed memory," where the pair, to their amazement, horror, and indignation, were refused admittance by the irate landlady of the principal hotel as not quite "class" enough. Like many things in life it makes a comic enough story, when told as R. L. S. alone of recent writers could tell it, but it had its nasty side which he does not conceal. And then at the "Croix de

Malte," a very humble auberge indeed, they were delightfully entertained, though in a humble fashion, by Monsieur Bazin and his spouse. Stevenson must have felt as he wrote, for he sent them a copy of the book wherefrom they got the passage translated. They had been much interested and were proud of it. Time had not stood still at La Fère any more than in other places. Madame Bazin told Mr. Hammerton that her husband was dead, and Mr. Hammerton had to tell her in return that Stevenson was gone also. Bazin seems to have struck R. L. S. as a good name for an innkeeper. He gives it to the keeper of the auberge in the dunes at Dunkirk, the scene of the exciting adventures which conclude *Catriona*.

One other of the halting-places of the voyage deserves a word, and that is Noyon, a very old place of between 7000 and 8000 inhabitants. The Cathedral impressed the travellers. Well it might, for it is a masterpiece of the Transition style of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Nor is it choked up with buildings as so many foreign cathedrals are. The space around has the grave, solemn, dignified peace of the English close, so that the beautiful church is seen to the best effect. Here a man was born of undoubted interest to Stevenson, no less indeed than the great Reformer Calvin (1509–1564). At the age of twelve he had a benefice in the Cathedral, for he came of influential people. Mr. Hammerton suggests that R. L. S. cannot have known or remembered the fact or he would have edified us with a choice discourse. This is possible

but not certain. At Pontoise, eighteen miles from Paris, they stop. The rivers were too broad, and had lost their individual interest. The travellers had received a packet of home letters at Compiègne. That broke for a time the charm or spell. Desire for other things arose in their hearts, and, after all, they began as they liked and stopped as they liked.

As the *Inland Voyage* is now published an *Epilogue* is attached. It is of an earlier date, and narrates an adventure of the year before—that is, of 1875. The scene is the department of the Loiret. It occurred during a walk in the valley of the Loing, and describes the arrest of Stevenson as a German spy. He had come from "the most unfashionable spot in Europe, Barbizon." He was dressed like a tramp, was indeed mistaken by the landlady of a roadside change-house for a beggar. From Château Reynard, in a green valley with beautiful trees, they went on to Châtillon-sur-Loing. It is a small place, with a population of 247·0, and contains two houses of the sixteenth century, one called Paradise because Catholics worshipped there, the other Hell because it was a Calvinist meeting-house. Here was born Admiral de Coligny (1517–1572). Those facts, you think, would have interested Stevenson if they had come in his way. They crossed over to Gien, a larger place with a population of 8519, in the valley of Loire. They did not visit the ruins of the Roman baths in the neighbourhood, nor did they pay any attention to the mediaeval bridge and castle, but pressed on,

walking separately, to Châtillon-sur-Loire, where the arrest happened. It is a little place of 3260 indwellers, and furnished with a commissary of police, of whose proceedings we hear at length. On condition of leaving for Paris by the train that night, they are finally released from a doubtful situation.

I say "they," for the Cigarette of the *Inland Voyage* shared in the adventure though not in the arrest. He is described by his fellow-traveller as of immaculate dress and appearance and of gentlemanly speech and demeanour, and it is elsewhere said of him, "his was a slow fighting mind, he was shy of his own virtues and talents, and above all of the former. He was even ashamed of his own sincere desire to do the right"; also, "he was an opposite and perhaps an antidote to Bob." This was Sir Walter Grindley Simpson, Bart. (1843–1898). He was nominally of the same profession as Stevenson, since he was admitted advocate 1873, but was no more, perhaps even less of a lawyer than the other. He was the eldest son of Sir James Young Simpson, the eminent Edinburgh surgeon who invented chloroform. He was a friend of Stevenson, one should say of both the Stevensons, and of Henley from an early period. He was with R. L. S. in tours in the Western Islands, in canoe trips on the Firth of Forth, at Frankfort in Germany, and more than all at Barbizon, where he was described by a chance Cockney as the "all-round British sport," a description probably more acceptable to the vulgar than the more profound analysis

of his friend. There are but three letters to him in the R. L. S. correspondence, one is from Saranac Lake, America, in October 1887. Many others were destroyed or lost. He was a devoted golfer, wrote indeed *The Art of Golf* 1887, 2nd edition 1892, and contributed on that subject to *The Badminton Library*. He edited the second volume of his father's collected works. I remember some poetry of his contributed to Henley's *Scots Observer*. Strange verse it was indeed. He gave Stevenson the black Skye terrier called Woggs, a corruption of Walter, but I think passed out of his later life.

I turn to that part of *Catriona* that deals with Holland. According to the chronology of the book, David Balfour and his lady-love were there in 1751. He describes his "first look of Holland a line of windmills birling in the breeze." The quaint aspect of a windmill was a thing to take the author's fancy, and he introduces one again on the sands of Dunkirk with its sails turning like some foolish person, holding up its hands. In their journey to Leyden they passed through historic towns, Amsterdam, Delft, and The Hague, where they had other things to do than to inspect the sights or study the antiquities. But the reason of David's presence at Leyden deserves a word. He was a young man of position, the owner of a compact little estate. Alan Breck, you remember, in the Scots fashion, was wont to address him as "Shaws," from the name of the place. He was studying for the Scots Bar. To attend classes at Leyden was the proper, almost the inevitable

thing to do. At that date the University of Edinburgh had only three legal chairs. These were that of the Law of Nature and Nations 1707, of Civil Law 1710, and of Scots Law 1722. The habit of foreign study, which was earlier than the century, lasted well into it. Bourges in France was once the fashionable place, and not for Scotsmen only. It was in this "Athens of lawyers" that Sir George Mackenzie, "the bloody advocate Mackenzie" of history and romance, as well as many another old-time jurist studied, and then Leyden, the "Athens of the West," had the vogue and kept it till the Faculty of Law at Edinburgh was fully furnished, and so able to defy foreign competition. The Continental student looked down on the home-bred youth, even though the latter was often more successful in practice. If you care to turn over some of the old volumes of the Scots State Trials you will find a curious result of this Continental training. In the debates on the relevancy of the libel—inevitable and useless, as we have seen, in James Stewart's case—there was a great parade of the works of foreign jurists, of men whose names you have probably never heard, still less have you conned their folios. Yet, in the chapter entitled "Full Story of a Copy of Heineccius," one appears with comic effect to interrupt the love affairs of David and his Catriona. The gentleman in question was a German professor and jurist who flourished between 1681 and 1741. His full name was Johann Gottlieb Heineccius. David does not condescend on the special treatise he tried so vainly to read.

Probably it was *Historia Juris Civilis Romani* (1733).

I turn to works where the scenery has no fixed locality, though it is more fully described, better realized, than that of places which he himself had visited. There is *Will o' the Mill*, said to be drawn from the Murgthal in Baden and the Brenner Pass in the Tyrol, where he was in early life—at the age of twelve, in fact. Yet it would fit in very well with many a scene in the Black Forest or the Odenwald. It is German at every line, in its forest and hills, in its mill which is also an inn, and in Marjory the Parson's daughter. And the same is true of *Prince Otto*, though we are advised not to look upon any map for Grünewald, that extinct fief of the German or Holy Roman Empire. It is professedly a kingdom of romance, for "on the south it marched with the comparatively powerful kingdom of Seaboard Bohemia, celebrated for its flowers and mountain bears, and inhabited by people of singular simplicity and tenderness of heart," and that is, of course, the Bohemia of the *Winter's Tale*, though the Perdita of the play is wife, and not daughter to Prince Florizel. No doubt the Perdita of Prince Otto was their daughter. On the enchanting scenery of those two pieces I can add no useful word. I think the basis was German, but spiritualized and refined.

In the story of *Olalla* R. L. S. has touched on what he never saw, for to him Spain was an untrodden country. Yet the account of the Residencia, of the groves of cork trees, the hill and woods around,

and the parting at the Crucifix seem to the stranger at any rate admirably Spanish. Keats is the familiar instance of the master mind who realized Greek life and Greek art without the scholar's equipment or any knowledge of the language. R. L. S. has done the same thing here. *Olalla* is the only story where R. L. S. describes scenery of which he had no personal knowledge. On the other hand, he did not write on everything that he knew. Thus he spent two winters at Davos among the high Alps, yet he has not introduced the scenery of the Alps into anything of importance. His omission to make any use of Italy is more remarkable. In 1863 he was in Genoa, Naples, Rome, Florence and Venice, and the latter city he had often discussed in talk with those who had been there. Again, he recognizes Rome as the centre of the modern world. Virgil was a favourite poet, and it pleased him to introduce Latin mottoes here and there. Yet he did not use his experience for a literary purpose. Perhaps the magnitude of the subject repelled him, perhaps he felt his knowledge was imperfect. Whatever be the cause, the fact is so. Once or twice he has laid the scene in famous cities, but does not say anything material about them. The fragment of the *Young Chevalier* introduces us to Avignon, but without any real local touch, unless it be that the mistral sounds through the piece.

As regards the travel writings I make two remarks. We have seen that R. L. S. held that you cannot travel to real purpose in company, and yet Cigarette was his companion in the *Inland Voyage*

itself and the *Epilogue* to it. In the first each literally "paddled his own canoe," and so were apart during the day. Each was concerned with his own boat and his own work, and conversation must have been reduced to an occasional word. At their night halts they had each other's society, but there they were no longer travelling. Thus they had the advantage of what was good in two methods. In the *Epilogue* they deliberately pursued the same plan. By agreement they walked at some considerable distance from each other—out of sight, almost out of mind for the moment. Thus the whole episode of the examination and imprisonment had passed before the friend had arrived on the scene. Why Stevenson attired himself in such a manner as made him the butt and scorn of the common crew I cannot pretend to say. Perhaps carelessness, perhaps vanity of a kind, perhaps as he was a professed tramp he desired to play the part with all the appropriate accessaries. Yet he did not receive the buffetings with philosophic indifference. Afterwards he may have reflected that they gave him adventures; if unpleasant in fact, they were not so in retrospect. *Juvabit meminisse!* The rubs were inevitable and admit of easy explanation. The traveller on foot, unless he load himself with a preposterous load of baggage, is regarded by the average Boniface with suspicion You must look at those things from the innkeeper's point of view; no doubt he has been cheated or has heard of other innkeepers being cheated by foot-travellers. The bird has flown without paying

for its temporary nest. Then the innkeeper is an ordinary man, and he looks with mistrust on anything unusual, and the peregrinations of R. L. S. were always of an unusual description. If the man went that way he could afford to go no better. Let him seek the humblest abode in the place, not the first hotel as R. L. S. did as matter of course. The world has changed since that time. People travel more, especially on the Continent, where they never used to travel at all unless they were beggars or princes, and you can understand in which category the pedestrian was ranked. Yet even as it is, if you go a solitary walking tour in your own country, though your appearance be quite respectable, you will not be without some difficulty as to your night's lodging. At the very best you are not a person likely to spend much, or to have any pressing need to dispense liberal tips; add the difficulties of the foreign air and the general aspect of strangeness, and you account even in a time when there was no spy fever for the troubles that beset the footsteps of Stevenson.

CHAPTER XV

AMERICAN SCENES

"A PROPHET is not without honour save in his own country and among his own people." This text is appropriate to the career of R. L. S. True, he has honour enough nowadays. He had even so in his lifetime, but he had published much of his best work, the very best you might say, before full and frank recognition came even from his own romantic town, which now dotes on his memory. The real impulse came from America and its folk. If they did not discover, they "boomed" him. Editors and publishers sought him so eagerly that his price went up by leaps and bounds. He was caressed and admired, and then the people at home, the folk whose business it is to buy literary wares, his old fellow-citizens, the British public in general, rubbed their eyes and saw in him a literary figure of the first importance.

Stevenson's relations with America were intimate. He was there twice at critical periods. The wife to whom he was devotedly attached was purely American. The attraction to the States was stronger because it was mixed with repulsion. Much in the American character and life and

scenery he admired, much he detested. Both appear in his works. He drew from history as well as from his own experiences. Here his writings are not his worst, nor are they his best. The magic glitter of romance is wanting, except it may be in the last scenes of *The Master of Ballantrae*. We have no short story dealing with America like *Will o' the Mill* or *A Lodging for the Night*. On the other hand, we have much admirable realism. It may not be true for all time or for everybody, but it was for him.

His first visit to America was in 1879. On the 7th of August in that year he sailed from the Clyde in the *Devonia*. His motives were various: his love of adventure and of travel, curiosity to see new phases of life; more than all, like the true lover of romance, he followed the lady who was afterwards to become his wife. In *The Amateur Emigrant* we have a vivid account of his experiences. The ship was largely an emigrant ship. Times were bad in the Glasgow district, and many, though certainly not all, of his fellow-passengers were driven from home by want. He assumed the position of emigrant himself. Nay, he would have gone in the steerage, but he required a table on which to scribble, and so he had to go second. It was here he wrote the *Story of a Lie*.

The voyage was of the most ordinary description, weather and vessel and company neither very good nor very bad. He goes as an emigrant, for there was scarcely any difference in price or treatment in his slightly superior style of travel.

Yet he is amazed and no little chagrined that he is taken so readily at his own valuation. He was universally accepted as a mason, and yet his point of view is distinctly aristocratic: "I was not prepared to find him turn away from a dish palatable to myself." He notes in quite a superior way the horror of fresh air. Again, three cabin passengers, a gentleman and two young ladies, moved by curiosity or sympathy, take a walk through the lower decks, and cast interested glances into every corner: "It was astonishing what insults these people managed to convey by their presence." We are not told any special act of bad taste of which the visitors were guilty. Again, "I was taken for a steerage passenger, no one seemed surprised that I should be so." But why should they be? Life is too short for curious analysis of every man one meets, so the ingenious masquerader might have reflected. The world has two tests wherewith it tries the stranger, and R. L. S. himself had applied those tests under other conditions: the purse in the pocket and the coat on the back (he might have reread with advantage his favourite Robert Fergusson's poem *Braid Claith*). He was not much better off as regards money than many of his companions, and he was certainly not conspicuously better dressed—to put it mildly.

He does not recognize that his experiment is not unusual. Every year many men and some women take up for a little the tramp life, or the servant life, or some lower life not their own, and as long as they do not wish to be known they are

not even suspected. There is another and a sadder reason. The world is full of what the old Scots Acts called "broken men"—people who have made shipwreck of their lives. They discover their origin only too readily; nay, they are given querulously to assert it. These are accepted as one of the ordinary features of the underworld, which was a lower world than this of the emigrant ship. R. L. S. was nettled, though he suggests that he saw the humorous side of the position: "I passed among the ladies for precisely the average man of the steerage." Finally he sees and admits the principle of assimilation: "I conformed more and more to the type of the place."

He complains of and is amazed at the laziness of the working man, the manner in which he has reduced malingering to a science. This is quite in the style of the average London householder. Adam Bede in the beginning of the work of which he is the hero makes the same complaint of his fellows. The laziness of the human animal is no new story. R. L. S. might have been reminded that his own inattention to College and other work was a complaint made against him in his youth. The working man, like himself, had no interest and saw no special profit in that which he had to do. When you take hope—and with most of us that means hope of our own immediate advancement—away, what is left in the Pandora box of life? When R. L. S. found work that suited his hand he became more than active, and the working man when he takes the form of the French peasant proprietor

becomes almost miraculously thrifty and energetic. There is also this obvious difference between R. L. S. and the great bulk of other tramps or emigrants or what not. An admirable Horatian setting of an obvious truth tells that there were great men before Agamemnon, but they lacked a Homer and their exploits go unrecorded. But this emigrant was his own Homer. He could tell his stories so well that he found legions of listeners.

He arrived in New York on the Sunday, and left again on Monday, continuing his emigrant journey by land across the whole breadth of the American continent to San Francisco. It took him nearly a fortnight. Express trains now do the whole in four days. There are through cars with baths, barber's shops, sumptuous restaurants, all the latest luxuries, in short, of American travel. And yet for the purpose of letters, nay for the purpose of real life, the emigrant train "bears the gree." He comments on the fact that emigrant trains go in a precisely opposite direction, and cross them from time to time, also that "Come back" was the burden of the message from one train to the other. In one way both were right. The desire to wander was at the root of each movement, and after all the return was at least another deal of the cards. Something might turn up in the old home which had not turned up in the new. Of course it didn't, but one is attempting to explain human motives and actions, not to justify their wisdom.

In *Old and New Pacific Capitals* there are vivid

accounts of Monterey and San Francisco, and in the case of the latter we have also passages in *The Wrecker* of the liveliest kind. Monterey lies at the south-east end of the bay of that name, which is of considerable extent, being twenty-two miles wide at the mouth. Round about the town is an amphitheatre of sloping hills, with great forests of pine on their slopes. Once the liveliest and most go-ahead city of California, it has changed all that, for those were the days before the American invasion, when it was the capital of the province. In 1846 the Americans took it, and Sacramento was made the chief town. In 1872 even the county seat was removed to Salinas. In 1900 the population was only 1748, chiefly of Spanish race, and for long it had that dreamy, old-world, decayed aspect which our author has so admirably set forth, its chief street being, as he says, "economically paved with sea-sand." But since then another change has come. R. L. S. might have lamented the change, though he may be in part the cause of it, for the house where he lived is pointed out as one of the sights of the place, and after you have conned his description you feel you would like to go there. Then it has an equable climate. It is only ninety miles from the great and wealthy San Francisco. There are the pine woods and the bay, and the obvious result are excursions and summer quarters. Since 1881 it has become one of the favourite stations on the Pacific coast. From 1900 the population has steadily increased. All those classes who make their living by the tourist

and the visitor abound, and yet, you are assured, Monterey still retains its old charm.

Of a city so well known as San Francisco it is not permissible to say more than a word. The great event since his time was the destructive earthquake of 1906, and the still more destructive fire that followed. Up to 1900 it was built mainly of wood, only about a thirteenth part was of other material. You remember what R. L. S. says about the frequent fires and the precautions against them. As in London after *its* great fire, the counsels of those who advised a city planned in a nobler fashion were set at naught, and the old boundaries were preserved; but building was carried on under stringent regulations, wood being replaced by steel, brick, and concrete, all of the least inflammable kind. You will do well to have those facts in mind when you read R. L. S. on the great Western city.

One other adventure and book we owe to this period, and that is *The Silverado Squatters*. On the 19th of May 1880 he was married to Fanny Van de Grift at the Rev. Dr. Scott's house in San Francisco. Mr. Scott and Mrs. Williams, the wife of his friend Virgil Williams, were all the attendants the ceremony had. The June and July of that year were spent in the mining town or camp called Silverado. This was far up Mount St. Helena, which rises to the north-east of San Francisco, at a distance of sixty-four miles by rail. It is in the heart of a rich vineyard country. Some of the most charming passages in *The Silverado*

Squatters are on the new wine that was to supplement, if not replace, the insufficient yield of the classic fields of Europe. In letters, though not in life, R. L. S. was a consistent worshipper of Bacchus.

In the August of that year Stevenson returned from his first visit to America. After the death of his father he sailed for New York again in August 1887 in the s.s. *Ludgate Hill*. He was there on the 7th of September. He was now a well-known writer, and received the usual attentions, pleasant or otherwise, which are the lot of those well known. He spent the winter, from 3rd October till the middle of the following April, at Saranac Lake, in the Adirondack Mountains. From here he got the wild mountain scenery that he used so impressively in the last pages of *The Master of Ballantrae*. The district is in the north of New York State, on the Canadian frontier, and near Lake Champlain. It contains more than a thousand lakes, and here is the source of the Hudson and many other rivers. The mountains run in five parallel ranges. It is a perfect hunter's paradise: black bears, wild cats, black eagles, hawks, herons —to name but these—abound. The numerous rivers and lochs are full of fish. On the other hand, there are no rattlesnakes or other venomous serpents. There are great tracts of virgin forest, and to camp out in them in a form more or less luxurious is the mode of life or recreation practised by a large number of those who come from New York, some three hundred miles away, to pass their holiday-time here. Saranac has three lakes

of great beauty. Its clear, dry air makes it good for consumptive patients, even though the cold is intense. During the sojourn of R. L. S. the thermometer fell to 30° below zero, but, invalid as he was, his health remained fairly good during his stay. The country was not developed as it has since been. Indeed, it was only whilst he was there that the railway was opened. It was not less pleasing to him on that account. Considerable as the distance was, he had many visitors.

Except in *The Master of Ballantrae*, he did not use his experience for any literary purpose. It has been pointed out by more than one critic that the name is curiously chosen. Master is the Scots title of the eldest son of a Baron, though I have known it given to the heir of an untitled landed proprietor. However, the name ought to follow the title, and here properly it ought to have been the Master of Durrisdeer. Towards the end of July 1764 all the parties to the story are collected in New York, which at that time was an English colonial city, as it was not till 1775 that the American War of Independence began. Those who know their Stevenson will remember that the Amateur Emigrant took with him across the plains the bulky volumes of Bancroft's *History of the United States* as the main part of his baggage. It was from Bancroft he got the historical incidents which he has woven in with his narrative.

Probably he did not think it necessary to reproduce very accurately the old-world life or personages of British New York. He mentions General Clinton

as the Governor. The Honourable George Clinton, son of the sixth Earl of Lincoln, was Governor of New York from 1741 to 1751, but that is too early. And again his son, Sir Henry Clinton (1738–1795), who as a General had seen much service in various parts, was in 1777 in command at New York, and in 1778 was made Commander-in-Chief of the British forces in North America; but this was at a later period, and belongs to the War of Independence, in which Clinton had some considerable successes on the English side. It is not necessary to discuss further a character whose name occurs but once. A greater part is played by Sir William Johnson. It was with him that the last journey into the wilderness was taken, and he is present at the final scene where Secundra Dass attempts to resuscitate the body of the Master. We are told that Sir William "had a diplomatic errand in these parts, and my Lord and I (from curiosity, it was given out) went in his company." "These parts" are the Adirondack Mountains, to which the party travelled from Albany.

Sir William, who lived from 1715 to 1774, was Superintendent of Indian Affairs in North America. He was of Irish origin, but had gone to America when he was twenty-three, and began by managing the estate for his uncle, Sir Peter Warren. He soon acquired fame for the success of his dealing with the Indian tribes, over whom he obtained more influence than was ever attained by any other white. One of his notable successes was at the "great Council fire" at Onondaga in 1753. Here he called

the tribes together, and succeeded in composing very troublesome difficulties. He had the complete confidence of the natives, from the fairness and generosity of his dealings. They urged on the Government his appointment as Superintendent of Indian Affairs. During the war of the conquest of Canada by the English he was actively engaged at the head of a band of Indian warriors. He spent the last years of his life at Johnson Hall, in the village of Johnson, which he had established, and even endowed. Here he dispensed a lavish hospitality and lived *en grand seigneur*. Twice a widower, he finally fixed his affections on an Indian beauty, sister of Thayendonega, war chief of the Mohawks, and famed for her "black eyes and laughing face." They had a family of eight children, whom he duly provided for in his will. He is described as a tall, handsome man of pleasing manner, both active and able. His part in the story is a small one, but his sayings and doings there recorded fit in well with his historic character.

Of the scenery in this part of the book I say nothing further; it is a winter tale of evil passions that strikes you cold to the heart. American scenes are introduced in *More New Arabian Nights* or *The Dynamiter*, but they are a farce within a farce, though the element of tragic horror is not wanting. There the story is told by the vivacious Clara Luxmore, and is professedly imaginary and spun out of that young lady's fertile brain. One is the story of the destroying angel. Here R. L. S. used his experience of the Rocky Mountains through

which he had rumbled slowly on the emigrant train as a setting. In the *Story of the Fair Cuban* the element of farce is pushed much farther, and little else need be said of "the Isle set in the Caribbean Sea some half-hour's rowing from the coast of Cuba." R. L. S. never was in Cuba, but he had sufficient experience of tropical scenery to supply him with material; and as for the negro rites, these he would take from more or less authentic books of travel, the whole so concocted and mixed as to make a very agreeable extravaganza.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOUTH SEAS

I REPEAT the chief dates of Stevenson's life in the South Seas. On the 28th June 1888 he started from San Francisco in the yacht *Casco*, whose skipper was Captain Otis. The first point touched was the Marquesas Islands. After a visit to the Tahitian group, his party arrived at Honolulu, capital of the Hawaiian Islands. Here they stayed six months. They paid off the yacht *Casco*. From here R. L. S. visited the leper settlement, on the island of Molokai, which is one of the group. This had important results, to be touched on presently. After visiting the Gilbert Islands in the schooner *Equator*, we find him in Christmas 1889 among the Samoa Islands, at Apia, in the island of Upolu. The town lies at the foot of a mountain. Stevenson liked the climate so much that he bought an estate part of the way up the height. This was Vailima, or the Five Rivers, which was to be his home for the rest of his life. And on the top of the mountain was to be his home in death, for there he was buried. He did not take up his residence at once—not, indeed, till October 1890. He spent the interval in two visits to Sydney and in cruises about the South Seas;

but no place agreed with his health so well, if at all, as Samoa. There he was fit and strong as he had not been for years, as he had scarce been since he was a full-grown man. When he left it he was ill. At Vailima he did much of his best work. There he died on the 3rd of December 1894, in his forty-fifth year. He was in good health till after sunset; then he was struck down, and at ten minutes past eight was gone. He was buried next day on a peak of Vaea far above his house.

There is a considerable collection of books about R. L. S. and the South Seas. Besides the official *Life* by Mr. Graham Balfour, there are his own writings and letters, two volumes of letters by his mother, *Memories of Vailima* by his stepson and stepdaughter. There are two noteworthy volumes by residents in the islands, keen, shrewd observers, men of the world, men of business, and even to some extent men of letters—Mr. A. Johnstone, whose *Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific* was published in 1905; and Mr. H. J. Moors, whose *With Stevenson in Samoa* is as late as 1911. They were both Americans, both admirers, yet both critical and discriminating. And there are other books of the type of Miss Fraser's *With Stevenson in Samoa* of 1895, and Miss L. Stubbs' *Stevenson's Shrine*, pilgrimages or casual visits which do not add to our knowledge, and may be safely neglected.

In the South Seas for the first time Stevenson lived the life of an ordinary human being. He came down from his height, or out of his sick-

room, or away from the pleasant land of Bohemia, and was something of the citizen. This had never been so. In his youth he had his own friends. Later on he saw much of men and cities, but it was as a wanderer—here to-day, gone to-morrow. He had no real touch of the inner life of the communities he visited. Again, in Paris and in Barbizon, he lived in a narrow, artistic, or literary circle, whose ways and ideas were not those of ordinary life. It was the same in London and Bournemouth. Also for long periods he was an invalid, confined to his own room and restricted to the inmates of his own house. Nor during his visits to America did he see much of the ordinary round. But in Samoa he was famed; he was at least fairly healthy, and able to move freely about. He was in easy circumstances. He was known to the man in the street, or on the beach, or whatever be the South Seas equivalent for the phrase. Nay, he was somewhat of the man in the street himself; shop-keepers, officials, parsons, native chiefs—he was in touch with all. Then he threw himself with the whole energy of his nature into the little whirlpool of Samoan politics. Besides this, he was busy writing. The very finest of his wheat is of this period. He was engaged in the management of a large estate and a large household.

This must suffice for Samoan history. There were differences between Germany, England, and the United States, the three white Powers interested. There were differences among the natives themselves, and with the whites. Stevenson threw

himself passionately in on the native side, especially on that of Mataafa, who was exiled some years before Stevenson's death. In the end, though not until there was much war and havoc, the island was given up to Germany and Mataafa was restored.

R. L. S. got on admirably with the natives. He understood their ways and their character. He was popular with them. They were grateful to him for his labours. There was always something of the untamed savage in R. L. S., and that perhaps accounts for his sympathy and understanding of the aboriginal. How far his views were right, how far his interference was in the interests of the natives themselves, it is not possible for me—I doubt if it is possible for anyone—to say. The point of view or rather the points of view are numerous and opposing. "What right had the white stranger there at all?" it may be said. But he comes, and in the end all is his. The utmost you can expect is that the change may be carried through in as deft a manner as possible, and with some regard for native interests. You would scarce think R. L. S. fitted for politics. He was impetuous, had strong feelings, and was liable to strong reactions from them. Much as he mixed with those about him, his views could not be as theirs. Men of his genius live in another world. *Solemque suum, sua sidera norunt.* Yet if R. L. S. erred, his was a generous error. He was on the side of the poor and oppressed, for people who had scarcely anyone to speak for them, certainly none who could speak as he could. Sir Sidney Colvin regrets

that he mixed himself up with South Sea politics at all. So much time was lost that might have been better employed, and even R. L. S. cannot always hold our attention on this theme. The *Footnote to History*, which is an account of contemporary Samoan politics, has had but few readers, and even *In the South Seas*, which is a serious account of that part of the world, was something of a failure when first published in periodical letters, and in its republished form it is only borne up, so to speak, by Stevenson's other works.

This is not difficult to explain. The civilized world has a certain interest in those far-off magic islands. It considers them admirable setting for a story of adventure. Thus *The Wrecker*, spite of its many obvious faults, is popular, and *The Ebb Tide*, and *The Island Nights' Entertainments*. But it has no desire to go seriously into the matter; and when Stevenson wished to do so, the attention of his readers flagged. Perhaps R. L. S. felt something of this. At the last he was writing of Scotland more than ever. Yet R. L. S. got much from the islands. The strange trees, the strange cliffs, the coral, the beautiful palms, all the seascapes of the Pacific were new to him. Thus the first paragraph of *The Beach of Falesá* is a gem, and there are numerous such. It was fresh literary material. He had no predecessor of anything like the same powers and of anything like the same knowledge. Herman Melville is the only name that occurs to one; but Herman Melville, however good, is not R. L. S. In Scots romance there was always the

overpowering presence of the Wizard of the North, and his themes had even a touch of the worn about them, but it was not so here. And the characters were also strange. Stevenson had a certain sympathy with reprobates and the broken men who have gone down in the struggle with life. Where will you ever get the Beachcomber better drawn than in *The Ebb Tide*?

One point is so illustrative of R. L. S. that I here give it more notice than its intrinsic importance deserves, and that is the Father Damien business. Joseph Damien de Vienster was the son of Flemish peasants, and was trained at Louvain in the Seminary for Foreign Missions. In December 1864 he came to Honolulu. He was stationed at Hawaii when the question of the lepers engaged his attention. The disease first appeared in the Hawaiian Islands about 1850. In the course of the experience of years, its terrible nature together with great risk of infection, pressed on the Government. The difficulty was dealt with mediaeval in its severity. The lepers were taken month by month to the neighbouring island of Molokai, where they were left very much to themselves. In 1873 a church was consecrated on the adjacent island of Mani. The Bishop told the assembled priests he was sorry he could not provide for the leper colony. Damien, who was present, offered to go. The Bishop at first demurred; but a party of missionaries had just arrived, and Damien's district of Kohala was transferred to a new-comer. The necessary leave was given.

Damien departed the same day, without saying farewell to his friends and acquaintances.

Molokai is a small, wedge-like island, a few miles to the north-west of Hawaii. It is ringed round with tall cliffs. The settlement was at Kalawao, graphically pictured by R. L. S. as a bracket on the wall. It was truly described as a hell on earth; and if the daring priest did not do everything that riper experience has shown to be possible, he yet, with limited means, accomplished wonders. He had gone in a cattle boat, which started in an hour; hence there was no time for leave-taking. Also the boat only stayed an hour at the island. He was about thirty-three years old. He never hesitated or regretted his choice, for he gave the rest of his life to the lepers. In 1884 he became himself afflicted with the disease, from which he died on 15th April 1889.

Stevenson's visit was in May 1889. On the 2nd of August the Rev. Dr. Hyde of Honolulu wrote a letter to the Rev. H. H. Gage in which he told his "dear brother" things about Damien which, if correct, were destructive of his reputation. "The simple truth is, he was a coarse, dirty man, headstrong and bigoted. He was not sent to Molokai, but went there without orders." He asserted that the reforms and improvements were not due to him at all, but to "our Board of Health." He was "not a pure man in his relations with women, and the leprosy of which he died should be attributed to his vices and carelessness" —with more to the same effect. It was afterwards

said that the letter was not meant for publication. However, it was published. Stevenson read it, and was moved to a perfect passion of indignation. He answered in his famous *Open Letter* to the Rev. Dr. Hyde of Honolulu of 25th February 1890, first published in this country in the *Scots Observer*, under W. E. Henley's editorship. It is a powerful piece of writing, a bitter invective put in choice language. He meant to wound, and he did his best. The points are clearly made and driven home with great force. You have to go back to the Satires of Pope to get anything like it in English letters.

The student of R. L. S. will do well to con it carefully, and this same student will find it a curious revelation of the R. L. S. character. It is not logical, and it is no proper defence of Damien at all. Much is made of the comfortable house of Dr. Hyde, his leisured and cultured life, and the fact that he never went to Molokai. This is the most obvious form of fallacy. The point under discussion was not the character and work of Hyde, but the character and work of Damien. In defending Damien, R. L. S. is still more peculiar. What, he asks in effect, if the charges were true? "Damien has been too much depicted with a conventional halo and conventional features." He had imperfections like other human beings, but he did splendid work under terrible conditions. The real facts about Damien are abundantly evident to anyone who will take the trouble to examine the evidence. He was not altogether popular with

the lepers. Perhaps no man could work for the real good of human beings degraded almost to the level of beasts, and live with them for years, and be entirely popular.

He seems himself to have had a somewhat low standard of cleanliness and comfort, which again is not altogether to be wondered at. On the other hand, he was a man of marvellous common sense, obstinate only in the good cause, not more bigoted than any Roman Catholic priest must of needs be. We have numerous letters of his to his parents and friends, all most sensible and moderate in tone. We have his report to the Board of Health in Honolulu dated 11th March 1886, in which the condition of the island is set forth in the most direct and practical manner. The improvements accomplished, and what remains to be done, are also told without a touch of egotistical detail. Dr. Hyde might have known enough of the doctrine and discipline of the Roman Catholic Church to be sure that no priest could go anywhere without full permission, and yet retain the confidence and approval of his superiors, as Damien certainly did. As to the suggestion of immorality, it was a baseless and unfounded assertion.

R. L. S. thought he would be attacked in a libel action, and possibly ruined; but none was ever brought. Dr. Hyde was perhaps not unduly sensitive. Perhaps he was better advised. At least he contented himself with describing R. L. S. as a "Bohemian crank," an odd epithet which must have awakened its subject's scornful glee.

The letter is not included in the Edinburgh edition, but it was separately republished in 1910 and also in Miss Quinlan's *Life of Father Damien*, issued in 1909 with the approval of the Catholic authorities in this country. R. L. S. was always his own best critic, though, according to his statement, he was much aided by his wife; and the fact that he was not afterwards satisfied with the *Open Letter* ought to be remembered, as well as the fact that he determined that neither he nor his should make any profit by its sale. Possibly for the sake of completeness it was included in the Edinburgh edition, planned and carried out with his consent and approval.

Here is a word as to the subsequent history of Vailima. Much as R. L. S. loved his island home, it would not long have held him had his health permitted his departure. When he was gone, it was natural that his house-party should leave a place of melancholy memories. They did shortly after his death, but some of them were able to return once again for a little. Herr Gustave Kunst, a wealthy German merchant, bought Vailima soon after it was deserted. It was much damaged during the island conflicts in 1899, but a considerable sum was paid as indemnity by the German Government to its owner, and by 1903 it had not merely been restored, but decorated and embellished in the most luxurious manner. Herr Kunst died in 1905, and the German Government acquired Vailima from his heirs to make it the official residence of the Governor of the island.

They also did something for the memory of the famous writer. In process of time, and under the rank vegetation of the tropics, the path to the top had become nearly obliterated and the grave overgrown. They cleared it, set it in order, and drove a new and commodious path through the forest.

Some have suggested an elaborate monument. One believes this would not have been the wish of R. L. S. himself. The grave on the summit, with its striking inscription, its blended memorials of Samoa and Scotland, is the only monument himself had desired.

There are many anecdotes of R. L. S. in his Samoan years, but few are instructive. It may be noted that the name Tusitala, or Teller of Tales, by which the natives knew him, was not of native invention. It was the name by which the Rev. J. E. Nowel, a missionary, introduced him to the natives. "The folks on this side of the world would prefer Marie Corelli or Mrs. L. T. Meade." Thus Captain Otis, a better seaman than critic. If sale be the final test, possibly the folks on *this* side would be of the same opinion; but it is not, which is a good thing for letters!

CHAPTER XVII

R. L. S. AS LETTER-WRITER

IN 1888 R. L. S. was in the island of Tahiti. He was very ill, and had to contemplate, as he often had, the possibly abrupt termination of his career. He then committed to paper a desire that his friend Sir Sidney Colvin should write his life, as well as publish a collection of his letters. In 1892 he reiterated this wish as to his letters. We have them now in four compact volumes of about three hundred pages each. This is only a part of what he wrote, alas! not always the best part. He kept no copies, so much has perished. Some of his correspondents never thought of storing up what he sent them. Sir Walter Simpson is a case in point, as is also James Walter Ferrier; but few letters of theirs have been preserved out of the many they must have written. Again, some of the most amusing were far too free-and-easy for print. Many things he wrote to W. E. Henley and his cousin R. A. M. S. are excluded on this account. Again, some were "too sacred and intimate"; also obviously purely business letters have no interest. Still, a great deal remains, carefully collected and edited. They furnish the best biography of R. L. S.

There is a great difference between his letters

and his other works. In those other he set himself to attain a high standard. He wrote and rewrote. He abhorred the careless, easy, and indifferent. What seems a casual remark is in truth carefully prepared. But in the letters he dashed off everything on the spur of the moment, jumped from one subject to the other just as the whim took him. Perhaps this was not his ideal of letter-writing. He described himself "as essentially and originally incapable of the art epistolary." His letters were casual, but they are a complete revelation. From his formal works you might not infer his true nature. Mistakes had been made. Mr. William Archer, from his joy in travel and in life, his breezy optimism, believed him a man of rude health. You could never gather that impression from his letters. R. L. S. was a many-sided man, and you have all the sides in the familiar epistles, all his passing shades of character, theories on art, literary criticism of the most slap-dash, direct, brief, comical nature. He hits the nail on the head with amusing directness, emphasis, and force. He is continually describing scenery and human beings, touching off the common incidents of the day with quaint humour. The letters are the most amusing *mélange* possible—so amusing that you wonder if his elaborate style of work was not a mistake. Had it not been better if he had always written like this? Here at least he is never studied, never "precious." But then, again, you think of some of the masterpieces like *Thrawn Janet* or the tale of *Tod Lapraik*, and what can you say but that Wisdom is justified of her children?

And then we have both, and without the letters it is certain you do not know the man.

Stevenson was frankly interested in himself and his works, so he refers to them continually. Thus the place they occupy in his achievement is properly as final touch, unless you were to read them twice, and they are well worth it—at the beginning to awaken your curiosity, after the rest to satisfy it.

There is a great change in the tone, corresponding to a change in his life. In his last years he was a man of position, even an important figure in island politics. Thus the South Sea correspondence is more solid than the early parts. He reverted to the paternal type. There is no difficulty in finding in him the true son of his father, a serious member of a serious family. The letters are absolutely spontaneous and unaffected. It can only have been in the last years that he ever thought of them as likely to appear in print. He expressed in plain, direct terms the wish that nothing of the sort should happen in his lifetime. Even yet a good many asterisks are necessary. He was averred a bad correspondent. Sir Sidney Colvin reasonably defends him from this charge. Himself is frequently complaining that those whom he esteemed most were remiss in their attentions. Obviously he enjoyed letter-writing, but he had difficulties to contend with. His post-bag was enormous. He had long intervals of ill-health, when it was impossible to do anything. His life was full of many and varied interests, especially in the South Seas, and there also the post played strange pranks. The mails went

systematically amissing. A letter from him was such a delightful present that it led to pressure for more than he was able to give.

The earlier epistles are the more amusing; they are full of the joy of life. As we know, ill-health dogged him from the start, while from the very conditions of private letter-writing it called for frequent mention. It is always treated as an irrelevant nuisance. The earlier letters deal with subjects interesting to all who read. When he became engrossed in Samoan politics, he naturally referred much to them; but Samoan politics cannot be made interesting to the world at large. One of his first correspondents who was able to bring out what was best in him was Mrs. Sitwell, now Lady Colvin. In a collection of this kind, we only get one-half the picture, so to speak. We have not the letters that were written to him, so we can only surmise what it was that evoked his answers.

Wherever he was, he would as by instinct give a picture of the place. Examples are far too numerous to quote or even refer to. But one remarkable word-picture I cannot pass. It is that of Duddingston Loch near Edinburgh in the winter. "If you had seen the moon rising, a perfect sphere of smoky gold, in the dark air above the trees, and the white loch thick with skaters, and the great hill, snow-sprinkled, overhead! It was a sight for a king." And on the return: "The walk home was very solemn and strange. Once through a broken gorge we had a glimpse of a little space of mackerel sky, moon-litten, on the other side of the hill; the broken ridges stand-

ing grey and spectral between and the hill-top over all, snow-white, and strangely magnified in size." He was then only twenty-four. He was often more elaborate, but how to better touches like this? He is specially rich in Edinburgh scenes—the dawn, the Sabbath stillness, the bugle call from the Castle, the horror of winter—to name but these. He had the sensitiveness of genius, but seldom its irritability. And this quite apart from his ill-health. Thus he had a peculiar horror of high winds: "Nothing sours my temper like this coarse, termagant wind. I hate practical joking, and your vulgarist practical joker is a flaw of wind." Again he talks of "the horrible howl of wind round the corner, the horrible haunting of an incarnate anger about the house, the evil spirit that was abroad, and above all the shuddering silent pauses when the storm's heart stands dreadfully still for a moment. Oh, how I hate a storm at night! They have been a great influence in my life, I am sure." There is a French proverb, "Il faut hurler avec les loups." R. L. S. rages like the wind itself! So an imaginative peasant might talk of the dreadful howl of the wolf in the village street in the bitter winter.

Because he felt strongly, he could describe vividly. Hence his magic accounts of woods and hills and seas. His sympathy was not reserved for nature; it shows itself in every direction—in his pity at the sight of a crippled man, in a kindly and genial talk with a labourer, in notes on some poor people in a train. His grief at his disagreement with his father is bitter, as is also his grief at the death of

James Walter Ferrier. How beautiful is his continual interest in and sympathy with his friends! When his cousin, R. A. M. S., was lying seriously ill at Portobello, he goes there in anxiety, he nears the house and sees the blind is *not* drawn down—the worst has not happened! How genuine is the relief and the revulsion of feeling! You understand how loved the man was apart from all his brilliant gifts; and though you would never have known his name but for those gifts, you have the same warm feelings towards him for himself.

Of the stray touches of art criticism that are scattered through those letters one stands out—that on the Elgin Marbles is much the best thing ever written on the subject. Not that he was always thus moved by the antique. Three years earlier he says: "Your old Greek statues have scarce enough vitality in them to keep their monstrous bodies fresh withal," whilst in contrast we have this on the figures of Michael Angelo: "The very marble seems to wrinkle with a wild energy that we never feel except in dreams." His point of view changes from time to time and so does his expression, but he is equally delightful and amusing as well as stimulating and instructive. "Chattering away to you on this bit of paper"—we can do with any quantity of such chattering! Naturally he is most at home in literary criticism. Virgil had always his special admiration from his mastery of style, his pathetic touches—"those clinging hexameters that sing themselves in one's mouth to such a curious lilting chaunt." He calls Tennyson

"Our Virgil." Again, on Carlyle: "I have heard too much against this thrawn, uncomfortable dog. Dead he is, and we may be glad of it; but he was a better man than most of us no less patently than he was a worse. To fill the world with whining is against all my views; I do not like impiety, but—there are two sides to all things, and the old scalded baby had his noble side." This is sane and moderate, so is a brief word of comparison of Henley and Rudyard Kipling as poets. It is also the exact truth.

He is never commonplace. To say that Alfred de Musset and Anatole France were well-known French writers would be commonplace; it is at least amusing that he thinks the one an "incredible cheese," and that he has "no use for Anatole," whom you yourself probably think of as gifted but unequal. Again, when he tells us that Meredith's poetry makes him drunk like wine, and that Marjorie Fleming was "one of the greatest works of God," you do not think the expressions unnatural, nor his inclusion of the revisers of the Bible among "absolutely loathsome literary lepers" uncalled for.

His best literary criticism is of himself. He took a healthy and natural joy in his own literary effort and in its success. "I find few greater pleasures than reading my own works, but I never read *The Black Arrow*." He dedicates this last work to his wife, for the whimsical reason that it is "the only book of mine that you have never read—and never will read." Of two of his short stories, "*Tod Lapraik* is a piece of living Scots; if I had never writ any-

thing but that and *Thrawn Janet*, still I had been a writer." *Thrawn Janet* was first published in the *Cornhill*. He wrote to his father: "I made Miss Ferrier read us *Thrawn Janet*, and was quite bowled over by my own work." If you understand Scots and a peculiar vein of antique Scots religious sentiment as Stevenson did, you will have the same opinion. As far as he had gone with *Weir of Hermiston*, he thought highly of it. *The Merry Men* was a special favourite—indeed at one time he thought of expanding it. Of the longer works which he had actually finished he placed *Catriona* first, and in this the majority of critics would agree. He calls it his high-water mark.

He draws his own portrait to Mrs. Sitwell: "A strange person; not so lean, say experts, but infinitely battered. Mighty active again on the whole." But this is not so comic as an earlier account to Cosmo Monkhouse: "High and very narrow. Upon the lungs I will not linger. The heart is large enough for a ball-room, the belly greedy and inefficient, the brain stocked with the most damnable explosives like a dynamiter's den. The whole place is well furnished, though not in a very pure taste: Corinthian much of it; showy and not strong." And this at the time of his marriage: "When I was a mere complication of cough and bones, much fitter for an emblem of mortality than a bridegroom." There is his comic exaggeration, flashes of truth, a sense of his own weak and strong points. By unexpected turns, he maintains and quickens your interest. Sometimes it is pure

jest, so you are not to take him too seriously, but there is sound sense in his jesting. "I have not sold myself to the devil, for I could never find him." Again: "I cannot say why I like the sea; no man is more cynically and constantly alive to its perils. I regard it as the highest form of gambling, and yet I love the sea as much as I hate gambling." When he touches land after long absence on the Pacific: "We are now about to rise like whales from this long dive."

He on occasion drops into Scots, though he commonly reserves this for his Scots correspondents. Thus he describes an addition to his household at Marseilles: "Our servant is a Muckle Hash of a Weedy." Admirably conveying the appearance of a huge, shapeless mass! It has been laid to his charge that he was egotistical. It is clear that he took a perfectly sane and clear view of his achievement. His reception at New York, when he went there on a second occasion as a well-known man, was a mere nuisance to him. He expresses himself again and again in the most modest manner. He is lavish in praise and compliment for his friends. Naturally much interested in himself, he knew how to make himself interesting to other people. If in some ways he was a Bohemian, he is free from what are considered the attributes of a Bohemian. He was rigidly honest in money matters, and that when money was of great importance to him. In fact, if you were to search for faults of character, as exhibited in the letters, you would be hard put to find them. You might

allege a want of balance—that was due to super-sensitiveness; and he may have had too good an opinion of himself as a politician, but all such are minor matters. On the other hand, you must again remember the Horatian phrase, "Nothing hinders us to talk the truth when laughing." Here are great common sense and shrewdness, true views of life as well as of letters, true pictures of maxim and of polity. His letters are in effect "Familiar Studies of Men and Books."

His financial relations with his father are expressed with admirable sense and truth: "It is fortunate for me I have a father, or I should long ago have died; but the opportunity of the aid makes the necessity none the more welcome." Had he been a poor man, he must have stayed in Edinburgh, and that had meant early death. It was the knowledge of this fact that gave him his deepest sympathy with Robert Fergusson, of whom he almost believed himself a reincarnation, so like up to a certain point were their lives and destinies. He would have probably gone under in California had there not been generous help extended to him. Of this there is full recognition, with becoming gratitude, and yet with an honest and honourable expression of regret. His remarks on missions are particularly sensible. They are, of course, not ultra-evangelical; just as little are they scornful and disdainful. Finally, almost every letter from first to last is a sermon on the duty of cheerfulness. A brave and beautiful spirit! Such must be your final verdict.

CHAPTER XVIII

R. L. S. AS PLAYWRIGHT

STEVENSON wrote four plays in conjunction with W. E. Henley. A study of the works of both writers shows that some characters are mainly the work of R. L. S., whilst others seem originally moulded by Henley. I was told by Henley himself that what each did was revised and gone over by the other, so that no part could be said to be the work of one. The chief play is *Deacon Brodie, or The Double Life*. The problem of the double life had a peculiar charm for R. L. S. Brodie's career was a choice example. In appearance he was a respectable and prosperous citizen, but in fact was housebreaker, burglar, and bankrupt. R. L. S. rewrote the piece several times; the first draft is dated 1865, when he was only fifteen. In 1878 it was put together as we have it. It was privately printed in 1880, acted in 1883, and published in 1892. The piece is intensely local, as much so as a poem of Fergusson. And most of the action is in the High Street of Edinburgh or the closes that run from it. The chief places are Brodie's Close, as it is still called. It is in the Lawnmarket, on the same side as and a little to the east of the West Bow. Farther down is Libber-

ton's Wynd. George IV Bridge now passes over its site. Here lived Jean Watt, one of Brodie's mistresses, by whom he had two children. Anne Grant, his other mistress, had three. She lived in Cant's Close, which is below Niddry Street, on the same side. Across the street, though not so far down, is Fleshmarket Close. Here was Clarke's tavern, a favourite "howf" of the Deacon's.

Brodie was Deacon of the Wrights or Carpenters, as his father had been before him. The Wrights was one of the incorporated trades of Edinburgh, and the Deacon was their head; as such he was a member of the Town Council. Old Brodie died in 1782. The son, who then was forty-one years of age, succeeded to a good business and a comparatively large fortune. There was no abler workman in Edinburgh, so a prosperous life lay easily before him; but he was given over to all sorts of secret vices. Drinking and cock-fighting were not thought of as vices in Old Edinburgh, but gambling and immorality were, and Brodie was a desperate gambler with dice and cards and what not. He joined himself to a gang of housebreakers, was the leader and the most active member. At this time Edinburgh was policed by the Town Guard, whose abilities were scarce equal to quelling a street riot. There was no provision for anything requiring skilled detective work. Then Old Edinburgh arrangements were of a simple and homely character, and Brodie could pick a lock to pieces quicker and more easily than he could construct. His position gave him some

advantages. It is not certain that he made large sums by his crimes. He enjoyed his wrongdoing. He had the true criminal instinct, the double life was his by preference.

Finally the gang robbed the Excise Office in Chessel's Court, Canongate. It is on the same side as Brodie's Close and Libberton's Wynd, though much farther down, and out of the bounds of the old city proper. Their booty was but trifling, but this was a Government office, so the authorities were stirred into abnormal activity. Some of the gang peached; Brodie escaped to Holland, but was arrested at Amsterdam on his way to America. He was brought back, tried along with Smith, one of his associates, before the High Court of Justiciary at Edinburgh. There were five presiding Judges, of whom the chief was Lord Braxfield, that pet figure of Stevenson's. The pair were convicted and hanged on the 2nd October 1788, at the west end of the Tolbooth, where they had been confined. This Tolbooth was the famous Edinburgh prison known as the Heart of Midlothian. It continued westward the line of the Luckenbooths. The drop, it is said, was an invention of Brodie's own.

That is the outline of the true facts of the case, but very considerable changes are made in the drama, so as to bring the chief incidents into manageable compass. The action of the play is about fifty hours, beginning on Saturday night and ending on Monday. The Deacon's father is represented as living, though he had been dead six years. Andrew Ainslie, Humphrey Moor, and

George Smith appear, though their actual parts are varied. A totally imaginary Bow Street runner named Hunt takes an active part in the proceedings. Brodie is given a sister called Mary, who has a l ver named Walter Leslie. Jean was the real name of the sister, but this is changed to Mary, probably because Jean was the first name of Brodie's mistress. This last, in fact, appeared at the trial to support an attempted alibi which was set up on his behalf. Anne Grant was not called at the trial, nor does she appear in the play. Jean Watt does, and is an admirable picture of a lower-class Scotswoman. You put her down to R. L. S., just as you put down Hunt with his graphic and picturesque slang phrases to Henley. In the play the Deacon attacks Hunt, who parries the blow and mortally wounds him. Thus the complicated and long-drawn business of the arrest, trial, and execution is evaded.

R. L. S. had almost an antipathy to the Plays. At any rate, he soon lost interest or belief in them. He writes to Sir Sidney Colvin in July 1884 regretting that Henley is likely to lose money on their production: "It is about Henley, not Brodie, that I care"; and again, "I fear my affections are not strong to my past works. They are blotted out by others, and anyhow the *Deacon* is dam bad." Mr. Charles Baxter told r .e that R. L. S. was inclined always to consider the Plays as nothing. Henley to the last believed in them, not merely as literature but as practical working pieces. I have often heard him express this view, for he spoke more of the

Plays than he did of his other works. He discussed them chiefly in connection with the theatre. He thought highly of the *Deacon*, as he called the piece. It was played in America throughout a somewhat lengthy tour. The name part was taken by Edward Henley, a brother of W. E. H. and an actor of very considerable promise, which time was not given to him to fulfil, for he died young. The piece had a qualified success. It is occasionally produced on special occasions, but neither it nor any of its fellows, also occasionally represented, have had a continuous or popular run.

Next in order and importance comes *Beau Austin*. The place is given as Tunbridge Wells and the time 1820. The piece is not less local than *Deacon Brodie*, though there is no historical incident behind it. It is rather a picture of manners at the Wells when these were at the height of their splendour. "We bring a fancy of those Georgian days," says W. E. H. in a charmingly written prologue. The Wells are not the centre of fashion that they once were, though after Bath they form the oldest watering-place in the kingdom. A quaint Kentish legend accounted for the peculiar taste of the springs. All the world knows how St. Dunstan seized the Devil by the nose with his tongs to the discomfiture of the fiend. Now either Satan cooled his nose or St. Dunstan his tongs in the water, and so the iron taste was variously accounted for by the peasantry, but it was not till 1606 that Dudley Lord North discovered them for himself. He thought the place better than the German spa, and to it he put down

his recovery from illness. No doubt regular hours, simple diet, and country air played their part. At first all was wild heath, and you had to go to Tunbridge itself, some five miles off, for your night's lodging. However, buildings of one sort or another soon arose, the Court went there, and the place became the very pink of fashion. The Pantiles date from Queen Anne's time. What a charming little place it is, " with its old-world, dignified air "! You can still imagine Samuel Johnson, LL.D., thrusting aside the gay butterflies of another age as he rolled along towards the spring! Beau Nash in his time ruled and arranged society at the Wells. He died as far back as 1762, when he was nearly ninety years old; but the Wells kept something of their reputation down to railway times, when people began to go farther afield and craved for something more exciting in the way of scenery than the pleasant Kentish landscape could afford.

1820, the date of the piece, is too late. The beginning, not the end of George III's reign had been better chosen. Then the Wells were at their zenith, and some strangeness in the ideas would have seemed less obvious. The piece is written in charming English. " A faint and fine perfume " hangs about the lines. From this point of view, and here for once at any rate, R. L. S. collaborated with success. The story is very slight. George Frederick Austin, called " Beau Austin," is the very pink of fashion and a dandy of the first water. He seduces Dorothy Musgrave partly by bribing her maid. Miss Musgrave suffers terribly, but her

pride prevents her accepting an offer of marriage which the Beau makes to her on account of the intervention of an honest suitor of Dorothy's. The Beau, though insulted by Miss Musgrave's brother, from the best of motives refuses to fight, whereupon Miss Musgrave surrenders, and the thing ends in marriage. The atmosphere of the Wells is admirably given, but the Beau is not a well-conceived character. He pictures forth a buck of the period, but is more like one of the French noblesse imperfectly translated and set down amidst incongruous surroundings. Truth to tell, he is a bit of a cad, and yet not consistent, since he too swiftly repents at the very mention of his misdeeds. The maiden aunt also is a shadowy, impossible figure; but Dorothy herself is admirable, and so is John Fenwick of Allonby Shaw, her admirer.

The scene of the third piece, *Admiral Guinea*, is in Barnstaple in Devon. There is no local touch which suggests the place, nor even the time, which is 1760, except the mention of the slave trade. Admiral Guinea is the sailors' name for the captain of the slaver *Arethusa*, now a reformed and Puritan character. He is a widower with one daughter, called after the ship. Kit French, a sailor lad, is her lover. He is not favoured by the Admiral on account of his free-and-easy manners. The scene moves between the house of Admiral Guinea and the Admiral Benbow Inn. David Pew, a blind old seaman, once boatswain to Gaunt but fallen on evil days, appears on the stage, and is repudiated by Gaunt. Pew attempts to rob his old

employer and to lay the blame on Kit. He is slain by Kit when attempting to injure Arethusa. Admiral Guinea then withdraws his opposition to the union of the lovers. The slave trade was not abolished in Britain till 1807, and slavery itself was only ended in 1833. But in 1760 and long after there was scarce a word against it by Puritans or anyone else. Admiral Guinea's remorse is antedated, nor is he a convincing picture of a Puritan. Arethusa is a very charming young woman of the Dorothy Musgrave and Mary Brodie type. But the gem of the piece is David Pew, the blind old seaman, with his strong and powerful slang speeches and his satanic humour. He is a villain of the deepest dye, but you cannot resist a sneaking fondness for him, with his "noggins of rum" and his slaver "chanties."

He appears at the beginning of *Treasure Island*, but there is killed before the action of the story really commences. In both you have him set forth as a wicked old man, blind, witty, desperate, and in both the tapping of his stick sounds strangely through the piece. It is the character of the bos'n of a slaver or pirate, fallen on evil days, perfectly realized; the diabolical humour, the audacious hypocrisy, the greed, the rapacity, the sudden gusts of savage temper at the least rebuff, make up one of the most remarkable if disagreeable characters in fiction. *Treasure Island* began to appear as a serial in October 1881, whereas it was not till 1884 that *Admiral Guinea* was privately printed in Edinburgh. Thus R. L. S. had his

first conception to go upon. Also he had the help of Henley's emendations and criticisms. The result is that the Pew of *Admiral Guinea* is a more definite and determined, if possibly a more repulsive and hateful person than the Pew of *Treasure Island*. The father of R. L. S. had a bad opinion of Admiral Guinea and David Pew alike. The piety of the one and the impiety of the other were equally distasteful. Perhaps R. L. S. was more influenced by this opinion than he admitted, for in March 1885 he writes to Henley putting a very low value on the piece, "Pew is in places a reproach to both art and man," though in the next letter he opines that with considerable alterations "it will act some day."

The last piece is *Macaire*, described as "a melodramatic farce." The time is 1820, and the place an inn on the frontier of France and Savoy. The chief personage is Robert Macaire, whose history or rather the history of whose name is a very long one, which I shall indicate as briefly as may be. Robert Macaire is a synonym in France for a clever rascal who does or tries to do everyone with whom he comes in contact. It is a type of audacious rascality. A poem of the twelfth century which had a widespread reputation though its author is unknown, tells the story of the Chevalier Macaire at the Court of Charlemagne. He was bold enough to make advances to Blanchefleur, spouse to the great Emperor, and daughter of Cæsar, ruler of Constantinople. He was repulsed with scorn, whereupon with the aid of her husband's favourite dwarf he

planned her ruin. For a time he was successful; she was banished from the Court, but his vengeance still pursued her. He killed her devoted attendant Aubry, whose body lay unburied, watched by a faithful dog. The dog afterwards appeared at Court, and persistently attacked Macaire. Inquiries were made, Aubry's body was discovered, and when the Chevalier offered himself for trial by combat the dog was assigned him as adversary. The faithful hound was victor. Macaire confessed his guilt, was degraded and burnt alive, whilst the injured Queen was restored to place and honour. Various versions of this story were afterwards current in France; one of the best known was that of the dog of Montargis, where the murderer preserved the name of Macaire. I have already mentioned a legend not altogether unlike this which was supposed to account for the quaint name of the Isle of Dogs. But a dog plays no part in the version of the story with which we are concerned. On the 2nd of July 1823 a piece entitled the *Auberge des Adrets* was produced at the Ambigu-Comique. It was a melodrama in three acts by Benjamin Saint Amand, and Paulyanthe. The scene is an inn at Les Adrets, which is in fact a hamlet near Grenoble. It is this piece which gave Henley and Stevenson the framework. The scene is the same, so is the time, and the majority of characters are identical; also the plot is after the same lines. In each case Robert Macaire and his faithful attendant Bertrand having escaped from prison at Lyons, come to the inn on the

eve of the marriage of Charles the adopted son of the innkeeper with Ernestine the daughter of a wealthy farmer. Macaire in the earlier piece is the father of Charles, in the later he only pretends to be. In both the pair of rascals play a set of tricks, culminating in the robbery and attempted assassination of a guest. Gendarmes appear on the scene, and Macaire is shot dead — in the first piece by Bertrand, at whose expense he attempts to save himself, in the second by one of the gendarmes.

The piece of 1823 was not the final form of the legend. This was given in *Robert Macaire*, a prose comedy in three acts, produced at the Folies Dramatique in 1834, of which Fréderic Lemaître was chief author. In this Macaire was supposed to recover and again join forces with Bertrand. He meets the Baron de Wormspere, to whose daughter Elva he becomes engaged. The Baron is reputed a German nobleman of enormous wealth, in reality he is as great a sharper as Macaire himself. The action consists of the plots by which the one rŏgue seeks to outwit the other. Thus at cards they both cheat with such admirable skill that neither pockets anything. Finally Macaire and Bertrand escape in a balloon, to the astonishment of the Baron and his daughter. This is not at all the style of the first piece, which is after the fashion of an Adelphi drama, where vice is suitably punished and virtue suitably rewarded. From the second of the French pieces Henley and Stevenson do not seem to have borrowed anything, unless it be the conception of

Macaire as a superior and humorous villain, and not the mere melodramatic ruffian of the first piece. "Bitten!" or "Sold again!" he remarks, as trick after trick is discovered, and he unabashed turns to some new device.

Macaire is the shortest and slightest of the pieces in our author's theatre. The story is not clear nor is the machinery ingenious. Although the incidents are improbable or impossible, this is not a reproach in a piece of the kind. It is well written, like everything else its authors touched, but that is all I can find to say in its favour. Here as elsewhere R. L. S. was his own most severe critic: "Macaire is a piece of job-work, hurriedly bockled; might have been worse, might have been better; happy-go-lucky; act-it-or-let-it-rot pieceof business." Henley put it much higher; he thought it would go well if played with verve and brio. As yet it has only had a "success of esteem." We may leave it out of account. The others are not popular successes, but they cannot be classed as failures. They make excellent reading. They have many choice and powerful passages. They are full of fine and strong character drawing and striking situations. I have seen two of them, the *Beau* and the *Admiral* to wit, on the stage. They went very well; they satisfied what was perhaps a picked audience. They are not dead. They are given occasionally and always with satisfaction. Henley's fame is spreading as it deserves to spread. The works of R. L. S. continue to call forth the liveliest interest. Yet up to the present R. L. S. has been right. Now it is

always easy in some ways to explain a failure as well as a success. General statements can be made to fit in a particular case, with some show of plausibility. Failure is no proof of merit, yet it cannot be said that success shows a stage piece to be worth very much. The fashion of the day, blatant appeal to bad taste and worse instincts, cheap rhetoric, tawdry sentiment, all may give an unworthy triumph. There must of necessity be reasons for a failure, but the fault need not of necessity lie with the authors.

In February 1903 Sir A. W. Pinero, "our first dramatist," according to Mr. William Archer, lectured in Edinburgh on Stevenson as a dramatist. He had no difficulty in explaining why the Plays failed. They imitated the transpontine drama of the early nineteenth century. *Deacon Brodie* belongs to the school of *Sweeny Tod*, and *Admiral Guinea* to that of *Black-Eyed Susan*. The *Beau* is better, and might have succeeded, but there is crude technique and clumsy construction. There is some truth in this criticism on *Beau Austin*, though plays weighted with much worse faults have been huge draws, but the rest is inept. *Deacon Brodie* is only like *Sweeny Tod* in so far as it deals with crime. Now crime is a fact of human life, a favourite and proper subject of the masters of poetry and romance. "As regards Deacon Brodie, one cannot but imagine that Stevenson was hampered by the idea of representing strictly the historical personage. In this for aught I know he may have succeeded." As we have seen, R. L. S. does not stick at all to historical truth. The Stevensonian Deacon was like his creator, very

much of a moralist disposed to musing and introspection. In fact, the historical character was droller, braver, more frivolous, more callous, not so superior a fiend, not less interesting on that account, but then truth must be always nearer to facts of life than fiction. Sir A. W. Pinero was clearly right in saying that Stevenson had great dramatic possibilities. *Jekyll and Hyde* is almost a drama. When dramatized though not by R. L. S., it had a huge success.

The Plays were too good to win a popular success. It was almost impossible to get a sufficiently cultured audience in sufficient numbers to support for any length of time such works. The mass want forcible not fine language, broad not delicate shades of character, simple rather than [illegible] effects. Their minds are not sufficiently [illegible] to grasp subtleties, and they weary of hearing things they do not fully understand. Shakespeare [illegible] the stage on his lesser, not his deeper merits. [illegible] *Deacon* had been coarsened, vulgarized [illegible] have acted more successfully—if by success [illegible] the applause of the many, not the considerate verdict of the few. Again, an English audience wishes its play just as it wishes its novel to end happily, but none of the pieces really end happily, though two of them conclude with marriage. You must be interested in the darker side of human nature, perhaps in what is in itself disagreeable, to appreciate such things. And many undoubted merits, the excellence of language and so forth, are thrown away or worse than thrown away on the crowd. However, we have not yet the final verdict.

CHAPTER XIX

AS RHYMER IN SCOTS AND ENGLISH

ONE complete volume of the Edinburgh edition of the works of R. L. S. is taken up with his poetry. In the true sense of the term, he is not a poet. He has not that peculiar gift of inspiration which marks Tennyson among his contemporaries,—"Our Virgil" as himself named him,—which also marked his friend Henley. He never quite reaches that region, though it may be that once or twice he comes near it. But then he had a peculiar genius of his own. He was a master both of Scots and English. You would expect him to write noteworthy and remarkable verse. You can give him all the honours except the supreme one, that his verse is not inspired. He is a quaint and ingenious rhymer. The romantic note is as strong as it was in his prose. He pictures forth scenes and incidents with his accustomed facility. He had a right to rhyme. You would feel a distinct want were his verse blotted out from his writings. You may even grant that he said some things in rhyme better than he ever could in prose.

As usual, he is a severe and excellent critic of himself. He never ventures to put it high, though he confesses to fondness for part. Thus of *A Child's*

Garden of Verses, he comments: "Not song, if you will, but a child's voice," and for a time he proposed to call it *The Penny Whistle*. It is still the most popular of his efforts in metre. As has been said, there was something of the child in him to the very last—the superlatively clever child, the child of genius, but always a child. Also his memory was wondrous clear, not merely as to the incidents, but as to the moods and feelings of early life. Thus he was able to reproduce them when he was a man over thirty. He does so with the quaintest effect, because they are the ideas of a child of genius, full of curiosity as to the world which is opening out before his eyes. He draws a child's conclusions. You could deduce from it a child's philosophy of life and of the universe. He not only described what he saw, but he gives us ideas of far-off countries of which he had heard. Already the romantic note is strong in him. It shows itself in a system of make-believe. He would go to sea in a basket. He would have a fight with robbers or pirates at the corner of the garden. If that was not enough, and when that failed, he could at least express his desire for unknown scenes in verses on travel. Even then he felt the romance and mystery of the world. Even then he was haunted by the sound of the wind.

> Whenever the moon and stars are set,
> Whenever the wind is high,
> All night long in the dark and wet
> A man goes riding by
> Late in the night when the fires are out.
> Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Most characteristic are the unexpected turns which a line often gives to a simple poem, as in that of *The Whole Duty of Children*, where the child is to behave mannerly at table—"at least, as far as he is able"; or the rain that falls on field and tree and ships and—umbrellas; or the mystery of sleep, when he travels at night into the land of Nod. It is this quaint touch that raises the poems, and marks them out from any ordinary nursery rhyme, as that on the cow, "she gives me cream with all her might, to eat with apple tart"—a delightful variant of the stock nursery poem on this useful animal!—or on the gardener, with its unexpected moral; or on the dumb soldier, where you have a bigger world, and the reflections of the man mingle with those of the child.

Underwoods contains in English and in Scots more ambitious, though not more interesting, efforts. They have the same quaint felicity, the same absence of deep notes. Ideas that might be called remarkable are set before you in a charming way. Horace was not, as is well known, a special favourite with R. L. S., whose book uses his lines for titles. Among the Latins, he preferred the deeper note of Virgil. Yet in the genial humour, the doctrine of contentment, the friendly feeling and friendly compliment, in the moderate and well-expressed delight in what things there are good to eat and to drink in the world, R. L. S. is truly Horatian. *To a Gardener* is an instance. If likeness there be, the likeness comes not from copy but from a likeness of nature, a similar view of the common objects of life. Every poem has instances

both of the *aurea mediocritas* and the *curiosa felicitas*. Take, for instance, the six lines *A Camp*. Where in all literature is the charm of a lodging *à la belle étoile* more admirably expressed? The second part of *Underwoods* is written in Scots. "The day draws near when this illustrious and malleable tongue shall be quite forgotten." It certainly becomes less and less classic. R. L. S. had some advantages and disadvantages in using it. I discuss the point later.

R. L. S. was well read in Burns, and just as well read in Fergusson. It was inevitable that he should, not seldom, seem to imitate those writers. Thus the favourite rhyme of Burns, as we have it in his *Address to the Deil* or the *Bard's Epitaph*, was not original to Burns. You have it in Fergusson's *Braid Claith*, not to go back to earlier, if not more illustrious, examples. That rhyme you have in a *Lowden Sabbath Morn*. The facts are carefully drawn from personal observation. It is original; through it sounds the echo of a well-known tune, and well-known words, and even well-known ideas. This is the most important and interesting piece, though the charming lines entitled *Ille Terrarum* are as beautiful and reach a higher level of pure poetry. How admirably the approach of evening on a rural landscape is expressed—

> Or in the gloamin' douce an' grey
> The sweet-throat mavis tunes her lay,
> The herd comes linkin' doun the brae,
> An' by degrees
> The muckle siller mûne maks way
> Amang the trees.

The *Ballads* tell interesting stories in rousing verse, but they are not remarkable, and would have passed unnoticed by any other hand.

In none of the poems hitherto discussed is there any true lyric nor are there any love songs. This cannot quite be said of the remainder, published as *Songs of Travel and Other Verses*. Here we have the poems entitled *Youth and Love*, and the two numbers that follow after. You might rank these and one or two others with some hesitation among love poems, in so far as they deal in some sort with that passion which is the *motif* of so much poetry. But they leave you cold, and are without any touch of real fire. They are rather the work of a gifted writer exercising himself in various measures in a sort of academic way. Those that tell of travel or of home have infinitely more life and vigour. The first one, for instance, *The Vagabond*, is rousing and inspiring. And when, as in XVI., they refer to the ruined abodes of other days, or of memories of Scotland, whether it be town or country, Edinburgh or moorland, they are instinct with true feeling, and move you because they first moved the heart of the writer. In referring to the verses containing the now well-known lines—

> Where about the graves of the martyrs the whaups are crying
> My heart remembers how!

R. L. S. said that the words expressed the strongest feeling that was in him about his native land. And the same strong sentiment appears through

the mannered, grave, and beautiful words of the verses called *Evensong*, which conclude the volume. Such things have their place in the memory of all who read them, yet he succeeds best when he is touching things with a lighter hand and in ironical humour; in other words, when he is not seeking the higher realms of poetry.

CHAPTER XX

AS ENGINEER AND LAWYER

ACCORDING to his mother, R. L. S. when six years old, having won a prize for writing an essay on Moses, "from that time forward it was the desire of his heart to be an author." In this, as we know, he ultimately succeeded with brilliant results, but it was only after trying two other callings, one of which had a marked influence on his work. His parents intended him to be an engineer. His father and grandfather had been civil engineers. Their interest in the life of the world was bound up with that calling. He was always recognized as a clever lad. His path in life seemed marked clearly out for him. Though he never was an engineer, he went some way on the road to become one. As early as 1862 he was his father's companion in a round of inspection of the lighthouses on the Fife coast, and in the course of one day during this tour they visited seventeen lights. For over three years he nominally studied scientific subjects, especially civil engineering at Edinburgh; also we find him engaged in practical work at Anstruther, Wick, and at Earraid, the little island off the coast of Mull already mentioned. In 1869 he made part of the same tour that his grandfather

had made with Sir Walter Scott. He went to Shetland in the *Pharos*, the ship of the Commissioners of Northern Lights.

He might have seemed an advanced student, for on 27th March 1871 he read a paper before the Royal Scottish Society of Arts on a *New Form of Intermittent Light for Lighthouses*. For this he was awarded a silver medal. As far as a non-scientific reader is able to judge, it is a clear, well-expressed paper. But all this was more show than substance. He neglected his classes. He did not assimilate the essential facts of his calling, though the accidents of it attracted him. He loved the travel incidents, the pictures of human life, the romance and mystery of the sea. Himself has made this distinction. His father and he would look with equal interest on a river. The father watched the flow of the current, calculated its effect on the shore, tried to appreciate the result of building a breakwater or removing a boulder; the son observed the life on the flood, the picturesque contrast of trees and fields and water, the scenic effect of the landscape and how it might be rendered in words. He recognized, and as we now know wisely, that he had nothing to do with that business, and within a fortnight of reading the paper referred to he told his father so decisively.

From that time he was done with the subject, and thought no more about it. Other writers have raked up stores of scientific knowledge, which they have used even in the composition of novels. Zola is a case in point, though you may think the result not

altogether happy. Here there might well have been a *New Arabian Night*, in which a lighthouse, or some other engineering subject, was made to play a great part. But except the poem of *The Lighthouse*, where there is some little display of technical knowledge, we have nothing of the kind. No doubt he used the knowledge he acquired, but it was never the scientific knowledge. It was afterwards his pious task to write a *Life* of his friend Fleeming Jenkin, and *Records of a Family of Engineers*, this latter being a domestic history, in which he unfortunately never got beyond the story of his grandfather and the Bell Rock Lighthouse. Though not the most important of his works, they are both eminently readable. Their interest is a human interest. There is nothing that exhibits scientific knowledge in either of them. Many of his earlier letters were written whilst he was a student of engineering. They are interesting, but it is the same human, not scientific, interest. His father had been vastly pleased with epistles describing or discussing scientific details, but we have not any such.

As already stated, it was arranged on his giving up engineering that he should study for the Scots Bar, supplementary, at any rate, to his already professed calling of a man of letters; for his father, naturally enough, considered that calling highly dubious. Now he made practically nothing at all as an advocate. In a phrase of the North, he might be fairly called a "stickit" lawyer; though, as the majority of advocates are, by the very conditions

of their calling, in the same position, the reproach need not be considered serious. He gave up the battle almost at once. Law impressed him in a way that engineering never did. No class of men are so well represented in his works as lawyers. Also there is a display of technical detail impossible to a man who had not studied the subject. He attended a considerable number of classes at the University indispensable for an aspiring Scots advocate. He had third place in the class of Public Law; but it is a small class, and this does not imply much. In other cases he scraped through with a minimum amount of attendance. In England it is the habit for students or members of the Bar to attend barristers' chambers, and there pick up what they can. In Edinburgh it is usual to pass some time in a solicitor's office. It was the fate of R. L. S. to attend for part of two years the office of a firm of W.S., of which Dr. Skene, author of *Celtic Scotland*, and a very eminent historical scholar, was the senior partner. Principal and pupil might be supposed to have much in common, yet they did not notice one another, a fact regretted by both in subsequent years.

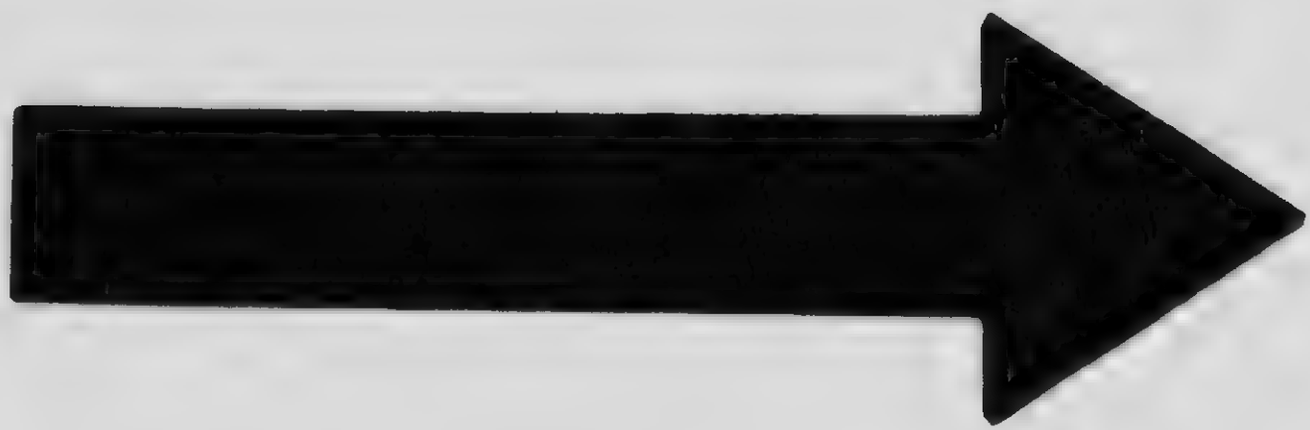
He succeeded in passing, and was admitted on 16th July 1875, and on the 25th he had his first brief. As is the habit in Edinburgh, the door-plate of his residence, 17 Heriot Row, was marked with his name and calling. It remained there long after Stevenson had renounced the Bar and was famous in another way—remained, I suppose, till the father died, and the rest of the household dis-

persed. I have often wondered why no "agent" of a humorous turn of mind ever dropped a memorial into the spacious letter-box. Was it lack of humour or the need to accompany the papers with a cheque that prevented this?

He trod the boards of the Parliament House in wig and gown for some time, and in all had four briefs. One case seemed promising, but was settled. "If it had prospered," said he, "I might have stuck to the Bar, and then, I suppose, I should have been dead of the climate long ago." Himself has described, in the *Picturesque Notes on Edinburgh*, the dreariness of this daily walk, which to an outsider might seem pleasant and even dignified. Perhaps the feeling of disgust is caused chiefly by the sensation of being entirely out of it—the shame of a rank outsider among a busy and prosperous throng to which he nominally belongs. However that may be, before the year was up he had practically given up the Bar, though he had already received influences which lasted to the end of his life. Let me point this out with reference to his works.

Besides this brilliant little book on Edinburgh, there are the *Notes on some Portraits by Raeburn*, there are the comments on the portrait of Braxfield; but his treatment here, as well as of *Deacon Brodie*, is literary. The legal part of the story does not emerge. But his portraits of lawyers! In the *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* we have Mr. Utterson the solicitor sketched with graphic touches. Mr. J. T. Mowbray, the family agent, is

affirmed the original of this. *The Master of Ballantrae* has in the brilliant prologue a sketch of Mr. Thompson, who professedly is Mr. Charles Baxter, W.S., his old friend. There are also various details evincing knowledge of a Writer's office from the inside. In *The Wrecker* there is Bellairs the "shyster." In *The Wrong Box* we have Michael Finsbury. *Catriona* is full of lawyers. Most important is the Lord Advocate, Prestongrange. Then there is Mr. Balfour of Pilrig, sheriff, professor, author, and his own ancestor. There is Simon Fraser, son of the attainted Lord Lovat; also the Counsel for the defence in the Appin murder trial, who with Mr. Stewart of Edinglassie, agent for the panel in the same business, are all historic figures. In their talk and action technical details are introduced, as, for instance, in the preparation of the memorial. David Balfour, the non-historical hero, is himself a law student. His experiences in Holland in that capacity have already been set forth. In *St. Ives* there is the London solicitor, Daniel Romaine; Dudgeon, his comic clerk; and most important, Mr. Robbie, W.S., of Edinburgh, an admirable full-length portrait. Finally, there is *Weir of Hermiston*, where a lawyer is professedly the main figure. There also David Keith Carnegie, Lord Glenalmond, is admirably and even tenderly touched off, perhaps after the historic figure of William Erskine, Lord Kinneder, the friend of Scott, "he was often compared with the statue of Forbes of Culloden in the Parliament House" (Duncan Forbes of Culloden already mentioned



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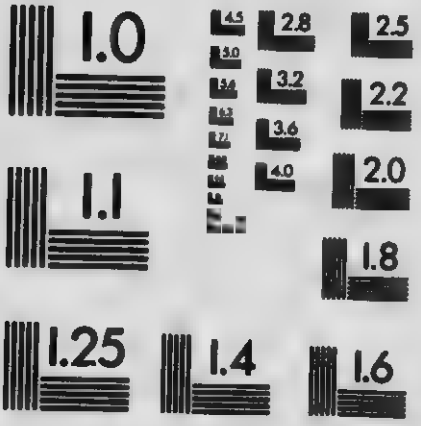

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(1685–1747), President of the Court of Session, and one of the greatest of Scots lawyers and Scotsmen of his time). He is made to observe, "We were hearing the parties in a long crucial case before the fifteen." This is an anachronism. The "fifteen," or "a' the fifteen," was a well-known phrase in old Scotland. It meant the fifteen Judges of the Court of Session, who all sat together to hear appeals from the Lords Ordinary. But in 1808 this Court of Appeal was split up into a first and second division with four Judges apiece, which thus made up the Inner House. Hermiston, as Lord Justice-Clerk, would preside over the second division. This is the modern constitution of the Court; the number fifteen was afterwards reduced to thirteen, at which figure it still remains, the Judges not in the Inner House sitting as Lords Ordinary. Another senator is Lord Glenkindie, the best and most genuine sketch in letters of the coarse, hard-drinking Judge of an earlier epoch; but again such a figure was something of an anachronism.

R. L. S., quite apart from the question of health, could never have made an engineer. His brain was not built that way. In a striking poem he tells us not to reproach him for deserting the strenuous lives of his fathers "to play at home with paper like a child," but rather to consider him as the end of a family that, having done their work in the world,

> Smiled well content, and to this childish task
> Around the fire addressed its evening hours.

It is his own testimony on the point. But I think he might have made a fairly successful lawyer,

especially in criminal law, if adequate opportunity had been given. In one thing he was like not merely "bloody Braxfield," but even "bloody Jeffreys." He had an acquaintance with the worst side of human life and human character; he had, moreover, a certain scientific satisfaction akin to that of the surgeon in another field in probing and estimating the doings of evil men. But he was not contemptuous or scornful; he could find excuses, he could be humanly sympathetic, all which things would have been useful to him in criminal defences. As for civil matters, it is to be remembered that every law case is a story, and oft an interesting story. He would have understood and readily perceived where the truth lay. He had strength of mind and will, and power of work. With a little practice he would have made an excellent speaker, and the charm of his personality must have attracted to him clients, agents, and judges alike. There is something on the other side. He was erratic, he was impulsive, he was supersensitive—not one whom you could call well-balanced. All those things would have detracted, but the result would have been something to the good. With the strong influence of his family behind him, he would have succeeded, but not remarkably well. His best and rarest qualities were not for the Law Courts, and the Parliament House would have been a poor exchange for the Universe. It is well for his country's literature that he acted as he did. Thus what has been said in this chapter is merely a curious speculation.

CHAPTER XXI

WOMEN OF R. L. S.

IT has been put against R. L. S. that he could not draw a real woman. Some of his admirers, on the other hand, have praised his skill in this regard. The question is interesting. In attempting an answer we shall get some insight into his character and the peculiar nature of his gifts as man of letters. He has written many novels into which no woman enters as a person of the story. This implies an exceptional course of treatment. The love interest is the main interest in the great bulk of fiction as we know it. It might even seem difficult to compose a romance without a love affair of some sort. Such things occupy a disproportionate place in fiction. "The stage is more beholden to love than the life of man": thus Lord Bacon writing of a time when the play took the place of the novel, and if for "play" you read "novel" you will probably agree. Here is a list of what one may call his sexless novels—they are taken in order of publication—*A Lodging for the Night*, *Treasure Island*, the *Body-Snatcher*, *Markheim*, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, *Kidnapped*, *The Ebb Tide*. Some of those stories are of his best.

Numerous women appear in his other novels, this as a matter of course. His genius did not expend itself along a single narrow line; he delighted to picture forth many and various phases of life, he could not do so whilst he excluded half the human race. What importance and vitality has he given to those women? Now he was confessedly a man of genius. It would be easy for such a one to introduce women where their presence was called for by the exigences of the story, to construct and adorn them with a certain mechanical ability. The puppets might walk and talk after a fashion, but essentially they would be mere "machines" as himself might say, lay figures into which their creator had not been able to breathe the breath of life. Such lay figures are frequent in his works. Here is a sufficiently numerous list: Flora Mackenzie in *John Nicholson*, Julia Hazeltine in *The Wrong Box*, Mary Maclean in *The Merry Men*, Flora Gilchrist in *St. Ives*, Alison Graham, afterwards Lady Durrisdeer, in *The Master of Ballantrae*. In the last two cases there are graphic touches that might make one dubious as to the correctness of this classification, but it is true on the whole; and though there are purple patches in Mary Brodie in *Deacon Brodie*, Dorothy Musgrave in *Beau Austin*, and Arethusa Gaunt in *Admiral Guinea*, yet I rank them as conventional and their charm artificial. They are admirable wax flowers. Perhaps it would be to ask too much of *The Black Arrow* to expect that the women should be other than the lay figures they are,

spite of some pretty touches in Johanna and Alicia Risingham. Also Clara Huddlestone, in *The Pavilion on the Links*, is an obvious "machine," and there is no more to be said of her.

There are few points in which R. L. S. resembles Scott, but one is the tasteless nature of the conventional heroine. Scott followed the ideals of another period. We have other standards, and thus Sir Walter's seem even more insipid than those, but both are equal in their lack of genuine vitality. Their creators had no real joy in setting them forth; they exist not for themselves, but for the purposes of the story. So much for this class. There is another set worth more serious consideration. They do not affect you as real, yet are they wonderfully made, and have a charm and attraction though not of flesh and blood. R. L. S. was an artist in the fantastic, he could create a fairy world of his own. The best examples are *Prince Otto* and *The New Arabian Nights*. In *Prince Otto* there is Princess Amelie Seraphina and the Countess von Rosen. They are charming and attractive, but not with the attraction of real life. You do not ask that they should be; perhaps if they were they would spoil the story. The first part of *The New Arabian Nights* has only a slight female interest. The chief figure will illustrate the point I am about to make. As regards the second part, there is the delightfully impossible Clara Luxmore, afterwards Mrs. Desborough, and her equally impossible mother — quite charming in their own way, and again too much reality had spoilt the fantasy.

Also Blanche de Malétroit, in *The Sire de Malétroit's Door*, is a genuine Stevensonian creation, and again you do not ask for probability, or even possibility.

Providence and the Guitar is one of the best stories, for the subject suited admirably the genius of R. L. S. Perhaps the men are actual, but I am sure the women are not, neither the charming Elvira nor the painter's peevish wife.

A still more remarkable illustration is *Olalla*, a brilliant vision, in which R. L. S. imagined everything—the scenery that he had never seen—a people of whom he knew nothing—the heroine, her mother, her brother, whom he did not make real by imputing to them a touch of madness. The heroine is beautifully touched off, though too much a being of another world to make you really sympathetic or truly pity her tragic sorrows. The tale is unlike anything else of its author's, for it is essentially and of intention a love story. In all the others, although love stories are introduced, they are episodes, not the real centrepiece.

What is left after those considerable deductions? R. L. S. could draw certain types of women with admirable skill, and though some of the sketches are slight they are life-like. But before passing to this third class I ought to note this. However true the divisions may be, they are not made by the author, and from their nature cannot be complete. Even the lay figures have their better moments where they really live, or they have their sometime part in a fairy-life where the touch of charm is on them. Lady Vandaleur, in the first part of *The*

New Arabian Nights, is a profile rather than a full portrait, yet she combines in herself the three elements. She is partly a mere machine, a mechanical figure necessary to the development of the plot. In her gay flirtation with crime and danger she is scarcely the inferior of the Reverend Simon Rolls, and is not less amusing, even because of the fantastic touch. But there is a genuine element in her, the fashionable woman of the world who beneath her soft graces and charms possesses a stern, hard, cold nature, a keen shrewdness ready to turn everything to its own advantage, and a cynical disregard for the feelings and interests of others when they come in the way of her designs.

The real women of R. L. S. are marked as being what is called in the North "characters," or even oddities. Such have humorous points which allured him. He was not one of the "masters of the commonplace." An ordinary type had no interest for him. It did not call forth his powers. Scott at his best was otherwise. Thus Jeanie Deans in *The Heart of Midlothian* is simply a shrewd peasant woman inspired by high ideals of duty. Scott makes her interesting by setting her forth with great vividness, making her consistent from first to last, describing with admirable truth her actions in hours of difficulty, showing her true to herself under all circumstances. She had not sufficient whim, was both too commonplace and too great for a Stevensonian heroine. A lower-class Scotswoman of a more pronounced type suited him better. He had observed closely, had been in-

tensely amused at, and understood and appreciated the actions of such. Here he never fails. Such is Mrs. Drummond Ogilvie, Lady Allerdyce with her trenchant, insolent phrases, as "Saxpence had better take his broth with us. Catrine, run and tell the lasses." Mrs. Gilchrist in *St. Ives* is a higher product of the same mind, just as Bethiah M'Rankine in the same work is a lower, Jean Watt, the mistress of Deacon Brodie in the play of that name, is life-like and consistent throughout. I would almost call her the author's best woman, were it not for Kirstie Elliott in *Weir of Hermiston*, who has the vitality and biting speech of the others, but a higher and deeper nature admirably shown forth, though not finished off, since the picture was never completed. And Christina Elliott is also real; her pretty ways, her essential shallowness, are put before you with delicate touches. She does not stand out with the prominence and vitality of her aunt, but that is because there is an essential difference in the two characters. In this remarkable fragment R. L. S. has for once drawn the commonplace with success. The weak, well-meaning, conventional, pious Scots-woman is set forth in Mrs. Weir. R. L. S. had seen and studied the type, though he only gives us one example. When from a point of vantage in the grounds she comes in sight of the ridges that rise round Hermiston, "her hand would tighten on the child's fingers, her voice rise like a song, '*I to the hills!*' she would repeat, 'And O, Erchie, arena these like the hills of Naphtali?' and her tears would flow."

I turn to the twin heroines of *Catriona*. Barbara

Grant, the daughter of Prestongrange, is of the same type as Kirstie Elliott, and indeed of Mrs. Gilchrist and Lady Allerdyce, though she moves in a higher circle. Catriona herself is the most elaborate portrait of a woman that R. L. S. ever drew. I put her down among the real figures, though she has impossible touches. Of her great charm there is no doubt. Her Highland idioms, her Highland ways, her Highland pride are delightful. The love scenes in Holland are very prettily touched off, and the misunderstanding is even possible, if you assume as you must, that David Balfour, spite of his many excellent qualities, is a solemn ass. You will not be deceived by the title page, however, nor forget that the main incident of the story is the Appin murder trial and things connected with it before and after, not the love-making of two young people. Finally, there is the Parson's Marjory in *Will o' the Mill*, where her appearance is only an episode, though an important one. She plays a fantastic part, but has so many genuinely womanly touches that I venture to put her among the realities.

Besides the romances, R. L. S. has written one or two things which deserve notice under this head. *John Knox and his Relations to Women* is an historical inquiry interesting but not from this point of view. The essay on *Falling in Love* in *Virginibus Puerisque* is whimsical, amusing, even cynical, but the subject is looked at from the standpoint of a philosophical outsider. One other thing is to be mentioned. In 1874 R. L. S. went with Mrs.

Sitwell (afterwards Lady Colvin) to view the Elgin Marbles in the British Museum. He had taken to Edinburgh photographs to serve him as a reminder, and from there in November he wrote to this lady two very striking letters in which he sets forth the remarkable impression those monuments of antiquity had made upon him—those "great white stars of eternal marble," and "those shapely colossal women and yet not women." He says they seem to him wonderfully womanly, "and those girt draperies are drawn over a wonderful greatness of body instinct with sex." We feel, however, that they belong to another race, and lowly adoration rather than love are the sentiments which they inspire. "We do not desire to see their great eyes troubled with our passions, or the great impassive members contorted by any hope of gain or pain or pleasure." But then in the next letter he strikes a more passionate note: "And think if one could love a woman like that once, see her once grow pale with passion, and once wring your lips out upon hers, would it not be a small thing to die?" He has written nothing more passionate than this on those headless fragments. By a curious whimsical characteristic touch he reserves the depth of his admiration for those mutilated divine figures of a far-off vanished world!

CHAPTER XXII

THE RELIGION OF R. L. S.

THERE are some difficulties in discussing with all reverence the religious views of R. L. S. His utterances are not consistent; they underwent change and development. They are mixed up with his work as a man of letters. Let us attempt to look at them in a plain way. First the external history. He began by accepting the points of view of his father's family, perhaps still more of his able and intelligent nurse, Alison Cunningham. These were the orthodox Presbyterian views, untroubled as yet by the New Learning. You gather that from *The Pentland Rising*, which was published in 1866, when he was sixteen. The struggle is told from the Evangelical standpoint. Then came the *Sturm und Drang* period, when in violent reaction he professed himself a sceptic and was in conflict with his father. That also passed away. He was reconciled to his parent. He conceived a strong aversion from professed and notorious unbelievers. He did not concern himself with religious matters. He lived in particular sets, whose ideas were not hostile but rather indifferent and aloof.

In the South Seas religious matters again occupied his attention. He almost conformed. He professed himself a Presbyterian. In the letter to Dr. Hyde

we have, "You belong, sir, to a sect—I believe my sect and that in which my ancestors laboured"; and again, "Your sect (and remember, as far as any sect avows me, it is mine"). On various occasions he attended church, nay, he taught for a little in the Sunday school. He was in sympathy with the missionaries; also he had morning and evening prayers in his household, the only non-missionary, non-professional so to speak, white household in the place, his wife assures us, where such a ceremony, ritual, or duty was punctually performed. Yet with all this it is clear to anyone who approaches the subject with a sole desire to get at the truth that he was destitute of fixed creed or belief, and that he is properly described as an agnostic. Even the *Prayers*, carefully considered, prove this. In all he did he was sincere and open. His mother lived with him in the last years of his life. To her simple and pious nature family worship even under such strange conditions was attractive and satisfying. Also some such ceremony was desirable in the best interest of his numerous native household.

There is a peculiar and marked element in his style and writing, what one may call the Covenanting note, sounding clear and strong. His first published work was a sympathetic account of the Pentland Rising. From early years he read the Covenanting authors with avidity. In September 1868 he writes from Wick to his mother acknowledging receipt of Aikman's *Annals of the Persecution in Scotland*, "a precious and most acceptable donation for which I tender

my most ebullient thanksgivings. I almost forgot to drink my tea and eat mine egg." And in the year before his death he tells Sir J. M. Barrie that for weeks he has been reading little else but the Covenanting writers. He had assimilated their thought and manner to such an extent that he could write and did write as one of themselves. He had read much in Wodrow, the *Cloud of Witnesses*, and Law's *Memorials*. He particularly affected Patrick Walker, whose *Lives* were a continual feast to him, and whose phrases had such a charm that he was continually repeating them. Thus "their resting graves" fascinated him. He uses it in the *Letter to Dr. Hyde*, in the poem *A Lowden Sabbath Morn*, and elsewhere. You could "lift" a set of phrases from his two best short stories that might have been written by Patrick himself. Both stories are of necessity put as narrated by a contemporary or his immediate descendant, after the fashion of *Wandering Willie's Tale*. Among the last things to which he set his hand, and which he left unfinished, were *Heathercat*, which is a professedly Covenanting story, and *Weir of Hermiston*, which has a Covenanting element. But this "note" has nothing to do with his essential beliefs. It is a characteristic of great writers that they are also great actors, and can set forth modes of thought and feeling with a view to their literary effect; whether they themselves have those thoughts or feelings as personal convictions is entirely irrelevant. No one has touched the beauty of holiness from a Catholic point of view so well as Victor Hugo,

and George Eliot's pictures of religious life in provincial England of her time among Church folk and Chapel folk go down to the very root of the matter. Yet neither George Eliot nor Victor Hugo could be called religious in the ordinary meaning of the term. And so you must discount most of R. L. S.'s artistic representations in poem and story as literary matter.

But you get plenty of expressions of his real views if you look for them in the right places. The best and most succinct account seems to me that reported by Mr. Arthur Johnston in his *Robert Louis Stevenson in the Pacific* of a conversation in the United States Consulate at Apia. "There is an insoluble mystery," said R. L. S., "preceding and following our lives which cuts the thread of polemic and makes our best speculations futile. We are all religious. I am religious in my own way, but I am hardly brave enough to interpose a theory of my own between life and death. Here both our creeds and our philosophies seem to me to fail." This is the view borne in upon you by a perusal of the *Letters*, and though it might be preached from some pulpits nowadays with little disturbance, still it is best described by the phrase "agnostic." R. L. S. is as far as possibly may be from the mocking sceptic. He will poke a little fun at "the bonny U.P. Kirks" and at the preacher—

> Wi' sappy unction, hoo he burkes
> The hopes o' men that trust in works,
> Expounds the fau'ts o' ither Kirks,
> An' shaws the best o' them
> No' muckle better than mere Turks
> When a's confessed o' them.

But people of unimpeachable orthodoxy do such things without reproach. The *Appeal to the Clergy of the Church of Scotland*, published in 1875, merely proves an interest in ecclesiastical matters. It is a plea to the Old Church to take advantage of the circumstances of the time, so as to restore unity and heal the breach which the secession of the Free Church had made.

This is only the negative side. It shows lack of faith with an adoption for literary purposes of what was for him a "creed outworn." R. L. S. had religious principles upon which he strongly insisted. True, some of them are pagan and might be paralleled from the maxims of Horace, whose philosophy in some points was akin to his. He was one of the authors that influenced our author, though not a favourite. One of his most remarkable essays is *Pulvis et Umbra*, one of his most charming poems in Scots is *Ille Terrarum*, and both titles are quotations from Horace, as are also *Virginibus Puerisque* and *Aes Triplex*. In *Travels with a Donkey* he approves this sentiment, it is not good to change. He thinks it well to remain for all external purposes in the faith in which one is born. Thus he professed himself to the end a Presbyterian, though only in a peculiar sense could he be called "true blue." Dean Stanley has claimed for Robert Burns that even in revolt he was a son of the Scots Kirk. Those who are anxious to include R. L. S. in the fold may urge the same claim for him. His creed was ethical. It consisted not in theological maxims

but in practical precepts, rules of right living and right conduct. It is hard to take away from such things the appearance of truism. The difficulty about all religions is to supply the motive power. That religion must be bad indeed which does not contain excellent maxims of conduct. The problem is to make the disciples act up to their own precepts. Stript of magic of style, of quaint or forcible modes of expression, what is novel in the ethics of R. L. S.?

His central doctrine is the duty of being cheerful, and brave, and kind, and happy. Happiness is to be sought for not so much for itself, or for any utilitarian purpose, but because you thus act in accordance with the best law of your nature and of the universe. You are best able to help others. You are best fitted to do your work in the world. Nay, happiness may be attained even in suffering. What is this but the ancient Stoic paradox of the wise man happy upon the rack? You are to be kind to your fellows, help them over the difficulties of life, and rather look at the beam in your own eye than the mote in that of your neighbour. A slight examination of some of the more professed ethical works sufficiently proves the truth of this. Thus he issues *A Christmas Sermon* in 1888 as a conclusion to twelve articles in *Scribner's Magazine*. It is full of such maxims: "Christ will never hear of negative morality. Try to be kind and honest. There is no cutting of the Gordian knots of life. Each must be smilingly unravelled." And again, "Gentleness and cheerfulness: these come before

all morality. They are the perfect duties." And then he asserts it is a mistaken idea that our duty to our neighbour is to make him good. "One person I have to make good; myself, but my duty to my neighbour is much more nearly expressed by saying that I have to make him happy if I may." Not, indeed, that happiness and goodness are related as cause and effect, and so you cannot expect happiness though you are to profit by it when it arises. Again he says: "A man is on duty here, he knows not how or why, and does not need to know. He knows not for what hire and must not ask," where again you have the Stoic note. And then we have this paradox: "Somehow or other, though he does not know what goodness is, he must try to be good; somehow or other, though he cannot tell what will do it, he must try to give happiness to others." This also is paradox, but by no means falsehood. It is an attempt to apprehend the truth by looking at it in various ways. And the same motive prompts him to say that life must be a failure, though from another point of view he might have urged from his own philosophy that it must be a success.

The *Prayers* which he wrote for use at Vailima were part of the mixed service which he was wont to hold there. The rest was made up in the reading of the Bible in the Samoan language by his step-son. Hymns were sung in Samoan, and the prayers were as we have them, or sometimes extempore. They inculcate the duty of cheerfulness and mutual help: "For our sins forgiven or prevented, for

our shame unpublished, we bless and thank Thee, O God"; and again, "that we may be true to what small best we can attain"; also he prays for the grace of courage. "Thy guilty innocents," he names himself and his household, again a paradox, not unnatural, and one not difficult to understand. The service concluded with the Lord's Prayer in Samoan, "that sublime prayer of the Christians," says Balzac.

R. L. S. was interested in an enormous number of subjects. Almost of necessity one crowded out or partly obscured the other, and to this must be added distracting occupations, frequent attacks of illness, and the shortness of the years that were given to him. In 1879 he began *Lay Morals*, a complete treatise on Ethics. It was never finished and remains, as unfortunately much of his remains, fragmentary. Yet he called Ethics his "veiled mistress." If he did not serve her in one way, he did in another. Not for nothing was he the great-grandson of a great preacher. "I would rise from the dead to preach," he said; and preach he did and does, for being dead he yet speaketh. There is not much professed theology in the fragment: "Christ must be understood and viewed historically and in His environment. Give some of His sayings a literal interpretation and they are unworkable." In some brilliant destructive criticism he sets forth the hollowness of conventional morality, points out the difficulty of being honest and just and kind and truthful, and then not for the first time, but in flashing and striking phrases that give us a

fresh impression of the facts of life, he comments on the strange position of man in a strange world, the corner of the universe that we inhabit curiously warmed by the sun, human life for ever dependent on a thread, our ignorance and wonder. In short, "our mysterious life in this mysterious universe." These are not the words of R. L. S., but they are a phrase which he brings home to us.

All this is in effect a confession of ignorance. He is strong when he comes to practical morals. Be honest in the exactest sense of the term. You are as much a thief if you scamp your work as if you give a bad shilling for a good one. This is how he puts the matter in his own profession: "Or take the case of men of letters. Every piece of work which is not as good as you can make it, which you have palmed off, imperfect, meagrely thought, niggardly in execution, upon mankind who is your paymaster on parole and in a sense your pupil, every hasty or slovenly or untrue performance, should rise up against you in the court of your own heart and condemn you for a thief." As connected with this is the question of money: "Our society is built with money for mortar," "Penury is the worst slavery and will soon lead to death." Then he goes on to point out that money is only a means after all, and "presupposes a man to use it." The whole essay is full of striking sentences, reflections that are, if not original, at any rate old truth presented in a fresh light.

In the last analysis there is this difficulty. It is hard to say on what ultimate basis the whole system

rests. You can have a system of exalted morals without any supernatural element,—such is the Utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill,—but R. L. S. would not have admitted that his maxims had this for basis. On the other hand, it does not advance us to say, "I believe in the supernatural, but I cannot tell what it is or how it comes to be." R. L. S. would certainly have said he believed in God, but he would have refused any definition or explanation; he would have said "I cannot tell," which is the agnostic answer to all questions. His morality was the morality he was taught in his youth, purged of conventional or merely adventitious elements, with particular stress laid on the maxims that inculcated courage, cheerfulness, and kindness. But as he certainly did not hold or continue to accept the theological doctrines he had first imbibed, he would have been hard put to it to give reasons for such faith as was in him. He postulates maxims of conduct as self-evident truths, or which upon reflection are entitled to rank as proving themselves. And here I leave this interesting but dubious subject.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE CHARACTER OF R. L. S.

HOW far did R. L. S. act up to his theory of life? Did he falter in his "great task of happiness"? Was he brave in the face of difficulties? Was he kind and helpful? It is one thing to utter heroic sentiments, it is another to put them into execution. Some people pass through life without decisive moments. They are furnished with a creed or morality which they did not construct, and which serves them well enough because they never have to make the choice of Hercules. There never comes the time when the paths decisively divide. They are not tempted, and therefore they do not fall. Two things are necessary for a reasonably happy human existence: these are means and health. With them happiness is within a man's own control. If he lack either, he finds contentment difficult. Now R. L. S. never was poverty-stricken. He confesses that had he been so he must have died. The only possible exception is during his first visit to America. Here he deliberately cut himself adrift. And yet he had not burned his boats; return was open to him at any time. Also, when it was discovered that he was in want of means, arrangements

were made to supply his need. The prodigal son is usually not considered as an object of either admiration or pity. The money difficulties of R. L. S. were from first to last, if not of his own seeking, at least so easy to be avoided that they call for no sympathy. It is to be said for him that he bore them cheerfully and courageously, that he was reasonably and properly independent, that he accepted help because he was sane and rational, but he did so unwillingly, since it was necessary, and only to the extent necessary—not that he might live in idle ease, but that he might be able to work.

From the Bournemouth time he was a well-known and successful author. Thus there was no question of financial difficulty. What had been the effect on his sensitive spirit of long years of poverty and failure? One cannot be certain, yet there are good grounds for believing that his character had been equal to the strain. If the ship had at last gone down, it would have done so with colours flying. Still its sailor would have said—

> I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul.

The reasons for this belief are the manner in which he met his long periods of ill-health. From first to last he was never well for any time. He was a delicate child, a sickly youth, an infirm man. These were external facts which he could not control, for from the time of his marriage at any rate himself and his household took every possible care. His sickness was of a chronic nature, and of the most distressing and discouraging kind. There

were long days in bed or, at the best, confinement to the house. This lover of the woods and fields could not visit or enjoy them. He travelled much in search of health, but the very travel was sometimes a confinement. The great bulk of his work was done under those most unfavourable conditions. He wrote and toiled incessantly, and whenever he was physically able. He was not morose or peevish. His interest in the life of the world and the life of others was ever keen and friendly. It is here that he is reasonably an object of our admiration. You discover in him a great strength of character, a great purpose running through all his years. He seemed to trifle at College, to reject professions where he had strong support and where, according to every computation, there was every possibility of success. It was because he gauged his own powers better than those around him. He was not to be engineer or lawyer, but man of letters. To this end he set all his energies.

He had the encouragement of the choicest success. Your books may sell by thousands, but your writing may be anathema to every person of real taste. On the other hand, your work may have its own select circle, but it may not suit the ordinary taste of the market. Obviously, failure is no proof of merit in an author, but just as little is an enormous sale. It was Stevenson's happy lot to please both the man of culture and the man in the street. Some masters hit both marks. Shakespeare is the greatest example;

Dickens is perhaps another, though he sometimes gains the mob by what are blemishes, faults of taste and sentiment, a... tawdry rhetoric unworthy his great powers. This double success is inspiring and delightful. R. L. S. had it. It was the only success he really cared for, and it went on increasing till the very end. In the last days of his life he did some of his very best work. Thus he had what is judged to be the happiest human condition—work with hope. It might not have been so. You can conceive him equally great, but not equally successful. There is the case of his friend Henley, whom no competent critic would pronounce inferior in power of mind, whose work at its best you could put beside the best that R. L. S. ever did. He did not make large sums by his writing—very much the opposite, in fact. Suppose R. L. S. equally great as author, and yet not popular. What then? How would that have affected his cheerfulness and his courage? The might-have-beens of life are hard to estimate. Yet one again can believe that he would have sustained a literary reverse with courage. He was curiously level-headed in his estimate of his own work. He proved his good sense by that estimate. Then he took success in the most admirable manner. He was honestly and openly glad, but not extravagantly or ridiculously so. Such success might have turned many a man's head, made him vain, pompous, affected. He has been accused as self-conscious, very much interested in his own moods of mind, given even to posing. But no one has

suggested that he was all these things after, and not before; or that success increased them or developed bad seeds in his nature into active and noxious weeds. Rather he mellowed and ripened with prosperity. Though not less gifted, he was more of a normal human being.

In the great scriptural parable of Job, every evil is pict d as falling on the good man, and we see a character tried and strained but not destroyed. There may be even higher tests. "Prosperity," says Lord Bacon, "is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity that of the New." R. L. S. had in no common degree, and from very different quarters, high gifts both of prosperity and adversity. His character sustained the strain. One last malice of fate he was spared. He sometimes feared that the mine was worked out, and he had nothing else worth to give the world. This seems to us almost ridiculous. Of course his work is unequal; so is that of every writer. The second part of *New Arabian Nights* is much below the first part, and the *Wrong Box* is far inferior to the *Master of Ballantrae*. Also we have the names of works that he began and abandoned because he did not find them good enough, and his fear was that he would only do things like this in the future. We know he was wrong; but had it been otherwise, I think he had strength of mind to have realized and accepted the fact. He would not have produced rubbish, and imposed it on the public because of his name.

So much for his moral courage, but he had physical as well. Captain Otis of the steamship

Casco, reports that in dangerous hurricanes he was perfectly undisturbed. In his wanderings, especially in the South Seas, there were times when he incurred considerable risk, from perils of sea and land, from lawless natives or still more lawless whites, even the forces of local government were arrayed against him; but he never blanched or turned back or even hesitated. There was in him the fighting spirit of the men of the Covenant or of the old warriors. He would have given whole-hearted admiration to the dying Douglas at Otterburn, who first of all gave thanks to God that he had fallen on the field of battle, not passed away ingloriously in his bed. R. L. S. had looked death so often in the face in periods of mortal sickness that it had lost all terror for him. The whole external forces of nature were less hostile than his own frail body.

Of his kindness to his friends and all connected with him his *Life* and *Letters* afford abundant proof. It is not necessary to enter the sacred circle of his family relationships to seek for evidence of what is patent. He was naturally proud of the family of which he came. They had a record of some length, and entirely honourable. Their works do follow them. He was no doubt the most distinguished member f a distinguished family; yet before he was born the name of Stevenson, the engineers and lighthouse builders, was a household word throughout the length and breadth of Scotland. And on this account you may say his family affection is easily explained. But he was truly grateful, as wit-

ness his devoted attachment to his old nurse, Alison Cunningham. He has pictured in one of his essays the feelings of the deserted nurse, the woman who has brought up other people's children and is repaid by neglect and ingratitude. He showed in practice that this was not his own case. Again, he was a devoted Scot, above all a true citizen of "Auld Reekie." He thought that to be born a Scotsman was the most fortunate possession given to the sons of men. He could not live in the country, for its climate would have killed him. And he fretted against the narrow element in Scots life and the stiff propriety of his native city. Yet he tells us that when he heard a strain like "Oh, why left I my hame?" he felt as if no advantage of fate or fortune could make up for his forced severance from his native land.

He has set forth in many an eloquent and brilliant passage, as surely these were never set forth before or elsewhere, the splendour and glory of the grey metropolis of the North. But here again there were substantial reasons why life in Scotland should give him some peculiar pleasures. The Scots are addicted to magnifying their historic families. Also there is something peculiarly honourable in the Stevenson record—you have the successful and even brilliant achievement, the steady and proper life, the considerable acquisition of the good things of this world. The Scots, like the Jews, are peculiar worshippers of success, and here was success in its most unexceptionable form. Thus every member of the family was assured beforehand of a

warm welcome, consideration, and respect. R. L. S. does not seem to have analysed the reasons that led to his favourable reception by his countrymen. He appears to have put it down to the kindly nature of the people, for he did not ascribe it to himself until he became well known, when he naturally was compelled to recognize the fact. Had his family history been otherwise, he probably would have judged somewhat differently of his fellow-Scot. I talk of the days before he was famous, for he saw almost nothing of his native land after his renown was world-wide. He must have felt in those last years, however, that even from that remote corner of the world he was first of all addressing a Scots audience. He must have recognized that many a humorous or pathetic touch would come home to the Scot as it would to no one else.

This local or national patriotism did not make him unjust to other nations. He was the most perfect example possible of the truth of the sentiment expressed in two well-known lines of Tennyson—

> That man's the best Cosmopolite
> Who loves his native country best.

He understood and loved three very different types of other nations — the Frenchman, the Yankee, the South Sea Islander. He had intimate friends who belonged to one or other of those folks, and he wrote of their countries in a manner which evinced whole-hearted admiration, sympathy, and liking. He was no mawkish sentimentalist. His pathos never becomes bathos; there is always a spice of quaint humour which corrects and

preserves. His insight was too clear not to recognize the evil and the ugly in human life and character — the shark's teeth, active and cruel, that lay hid under the smiling sea. Nay, more, he had a positive taste for the study of what was grimy. His bad characters are not of unrelieved badness, nor his good ones of impossible perfection. The necessity of his story made Edward Hyde an exception; but Hyde is not put forth as a real human being, but as a monster like Frankenstein. Also his neglect of his own rules revenged itself, since Hyde is more melodramatic, more a picture after the style of common or garden fiction, than anything else he ever did.

Of the charm of character of R. L. S. many of his intimates have spoken in emphatic terms. Of the charm of his works, it is for his readers to judge; yet how many of them who have never seen him in the flesh have told that they felt towards him as towards a dear friend? Henley once quoted to me the remark that was made of Burns by Mrs. Dunlop that the man himself was so much greater and more delightful than even the best of his works. He said the same thing was true of R. L. S.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE QUESTION OF STYLE

I PROPOSE to set down here some plain points in our author's methods. They are characteristic; they explain the singular charm he possesses; they give a glimpse into the secret of his success. R. L. S. did not magnify his office either as poet or prose writer. He thinks himself no *sacer vates*. He has not the proud outlook or pretensions of Dante or Milton. If he does not say, like Burns, that he rhymes for fun, he does not take himself with great seriousness. He is something of a cherry-stone artist; he works in miniature of set purpose; he avoids great subjects in history and romance, as well as in what he would himself describe as verse rather than poetry. Take the '45, and compare him with Scott. Sir Walter treats naturally, as it were, main incidents of the Rising—the march on Edinburgh, the occupation of the city, the fight at Prestonpans; also important historical figures, as the Prince and Colonel Gardiner, are set fair and square before you. R. L. S. deals with the Appin murder and some after-effects of the rebellion in *Kidnapped* and *Catriona*. His historical characters are all minor—Prestongrange the Lord Advocate, Alan Breck the fugitive

Jacobite, Balfour of Pilrig, and so on. Scott makes Rob Roy the hero of a novel. R. L. S. is content to set before you two of his sons. He wrote much on Scotland, but never on the great events of his country's history. He deals in an interesting essay with *Knox*, but it is on one aspect of his character—his relations with women; and those women, be it noted, are not those whom he historically encountered—Mary Stuart, or her mother, Mary of Guise. They are the women of the reformer's domestic circle. In his account of Edinburgh, the most interesting chapter is that on Greyfriars. That famous graveyard, and the site of, if not the kirk itself, bulk huge in Scots history. There was the theatre of such notable events as the signing of the Covenant and the imprisonment of the Covenanters; but the incident on which R. L. S. dwells at most length is a description from Patrick Walker of the burial there of five Covenanters forty-five years after their execution. Again, he has a chapter on the Pentland Hills: its chief points are the engaging legend of the flute-playing gauger of Fairmilehead and the visit of some marauding Highlanders to the farm at Swanston. Of Rullion Green and the Pentland Rising he says nothing. True, when a lad of sixteen he began his literary career with an account of that rising. The boyish effort is interesting. You have R. L. S. in the making, but long before he arrived. He would have been the last to put it forth as an important work, and it is significant that he never again tried history on this extended scale.

He afterwards issued, but for practical rather than literary purposes, an account of Samoan politics during some troubled years. This he admirably calls *A Footnote to History*. Even with literary names of his own country he deals very sparingly. He was attracted both by Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. He frequently refers to the first, though he does not professedly write on him. He has spoken on *Some Aspects* of the other; this professedly is not a whole-length or even a half-length portrait. He introduces Sir Walter Scott in *St. Ives*, but it is only a brief interview on the hill-side, where the Great Unknown is altogether unknown to the hero, and only known to his companions as the "Shirra." His one short story that deals with an historical character is *A Lodging for the Night*, an episode in the life of Villon, that picturesque vagabond of genius, wickedly attractive in himself, made more so by the deft touch of a master hand. In *Weir of Hermiston* we have Braxfield as R. L. S. conceived him, interesting, graphic—even important; though not very important, yet the most important historical person with whom he has dealt in detail. As already noted, his books of travel are interesting, almost, you might say, from the lack of interest. Except in the incident of the *Epilogue*, nothing important ever happens. Yet with how admirable a skill the most trivial things are set forth! They call up quaint or humorous or even profound reflections, and you read with delight where more pretentious writings or descriptions would fail to charm.

With true artistic instinct he selects those narrow fields of history or character or travel as best suited to his genius. He works at ease, not merely in spite of, but because of, the limitations. On deliberate choice he prefers to be an artist in miniature. But you never doubt he is an artist. It has been said against him that he is "precious." If that means that he is affected, it is not correct. It is true that he strove diligently after effects in words, and it is true that he was very conscious of those effects. If it is the highest art to conceal art, he is by no means always successful. When he makes a point, hits the bull's eye as it were, brings off his effect, you note the careful workmanship, and his joy in it.

Scott or Dickens did not work in this way. They painted with broad brush and elementary colours. They too designed their effects, but on a larger scale. There is no mark in them of minute care or elaboration, and you are tolerably certain that no such things were in their plan. R. L. S. is not so great, but he is more subtle, more careful, more conscious. In one sense of the term he is more artistic. He is rather like a French than an English writer, just from his care and use of language. He knows when he has said a good thing, and is pleased with himself for so bringing the effect off.

Scott or Dickens might be pleased to look back on a favourite among their works, but this would not have reference to paragraphs or phrases, but to the general result. Now R. L. S. weighed and pointed and considered not merely the effect of a

paragraph, but that of a sentence, nay even of a single word, trying it as a swordsman might try the temper of his sword. He uses words in unexpected applications, or adjectives qualifying strangely, yet with artistic propriety. He is never cloudy or obscure. This last is perhaps not great praise in an English author, because an analytic language like ours is suitable for clear, not obscure ideas; but R. L. S. is singularly clear and expressive. It was part of his artistic plan that his words should make very definite impressions, should catch and fix the attention of the reader, arouse interest, and at the same time gratify that interest.

Let me illustrate this by the quotation of some phrases, though I feel that, like jewels torn from their setting, they shine with diminished lustre, and you must reset them in their own page to get their proper effect. However, to begin with, here are some from *Jekyll and Hyde*. He talks of the "gaiety of note" in a street he is describing, of "the low growl of London from all round," and again of "the vast hum and patter of the city." I pass the striking account of a London fog, for I cannot disentangle or break off the phrases that together make up one definite impression; and none of the more elaborate effects are reproduced here, for their very reason of length and complexity. But we have this charming touch on some rare vintage: "And the glow of hot autumn afternoons on hill-side vineyards was ready to be set free and disperse the fogs of London." Or again, this of a physical effect: "'Sir,' said the butler, turning

to a sort of mottled pallor," which is an exact and vivid description, bringing up the face before you; or this of a mental process: "To turn on some nobler hinge than the principle of hatred." "Your sight shall be blasted by a prodigy to stagger the unbelief of Satan"—this is not so choice or remarkable, and is more popular almost in the vein of transpontine drama; but you would not say that of the next two: "Any drug that so potently controlled and shook the very fortress of identity," and "The animal within me licking the chops of memory." This latter is R. L. S. all over. No other writer would have phrased it in that way. Finally: "The slime of the pit seemed to utter cries and voices, the amorphous dust gesticulated and sinned."

I pick out a few characteristic phrases from *The Merry Men*: "The rain falling black like crape upon the mountain," "A breeze, I suppose, had flawed the surface," "A wonderful clear night of stars." This last was a favourite phrase of his. You may compare it with one of his most characteristic lines in the scraps of poetry with which he adorned *Travels with a Donkey*: "By punctual eve the stars were lit." One of his most powerful passages in *The Merry Men* is the account of those rocks in a storm, a whole page of graphic phrases. *Will o' the Mill* has at least one eminently characteristic touch, where Death says to Will on the last night, "You have sat close all your days like a hare in its forme" You fancy R. L. S. regarded this with complacency when he

had brought it off. It gives the whole essence of the story, which is an experiment in opposites, as Will's philosophy and practice are in marked contrast to the philosophy and practice of his creator. "Let us see," said R. L. S., "how the thing can be put the other way," and you have a brilliant *tour de force*, the man beginning with a desire to travel, and yet finally contenting himself with an ideal which he never put into practice. It represents one truth in life which may be thus illustrated. You desire for years to visit some famous spot,—Rome or Athens, or it may be Jerusalem,—and your ambition seems never like to be achieved. Circumstances change, so that you are able to go there. You may be well satisfied, yet you feel afterwards that you have lost something. The vague dream is gone. The attraction of the unknown is gone. At least Will kept this to the last.

Markheim is also full of characteristic phrases, as: "And through a haggard lift of his upper lip his teeth looked out." This of the dealer: in his shop there is "an intricate chorus of tickings"; and of Markham himself: "Brute terrors like the scurrying of rats in a deserted attic filled the more remote chambers of his brain with riot."

I limit my quotations from *Olalla* to those of the wind. You know from his own express statements—and if you did not, you would gather it from his works, with their curious references and strange imaginings—that of all the things in the material universe this impressed him most. You

must remember his exquisite sensitiveness, his peculiar nervous build, his early years in a city where the wind has always a voice, and one that is ever changing. In *Olalla* the scene is laid far up the Sierras, and it is natural that it should be a place of tempests. Here are some of his descriptive phrases: "The wind stormed about the house with a great hollow buzzing and whistling that was wearisome to the ear and dismally depressing to the mind." And again: "It did not so much blow in gusts as with the steady sweep of a waterfall." And again: "A far-off wailing infinitely grievous to hear." Or, to take the monster in a softer mood: "The wind in the trees and the many falling torrents in the mountains filled the air with delicate and haunting music."

From his *Travels*, a milk-can is a "great amphora of hammered brass." This is quaint and makes you smile, but it exactly places the object before you. "The hills and the tree-tops looked in from all sides on the clear air." "The leaves danced and prattled in the wind all about us," "but I was rare and hungry." "The world was flooded with a blue light, the mother of the dawn." "The golden specks of autumn in the birches tossed shiveringly." *Prince Otto* is peculiarly rich in elaborate scenic effects, most remarkable, perhaps, the coming of the day to the Princess, who, "falling from the whole height of civilization, ran forth into the woods a ragged Cinderella." But I will leave the book with this one atom: "The starlight dark, the faint wood airs, the clank of the horse-shoes

making broken music, accorded together and attuned his mind." Even in his most solemn moments he puts a thing quaintly, but with how impressive a quaintness! Thus in the essay *Old Mortality* he speaks of the destruction of his old friend: "His whole city of hope both ploughed and salted, silently awaiting the deliverer."

A keen observer of the life around him, he saw its ironic as well as its pathetic aspects. He is humorous and not seldom with an almost sardonic humour, an agreeable acid touch, not too pronounced but distinctly present, which, as he says of his old Scots gardener, lends "a raciness to the merest trivialities of talk." Of this same figure: "He would prelect over some thriving plant with wonderful enthusiasm, piling reminiscence on reminiscence of former yet perhaps finer specimens." The companion figure of the shepherd talks with "a kind of honeyed friendly whine." This ironic touch is more pronounced where he is giving us fiction pure and simple, as in *The Suicide Club*, where "His Highness took the President aside, and congratulated him warmly on the demise of Mr. Malthus." Or again: "Florizel in his official robes, and covered with all the orders of Bohemia, received the members of the Suicide Club." In the next story, that delightful curate, the Rev. Simon Rolls, reflects: "Here am I with learning enough to be a Bishop, and I positively do not know how to dispose of a stolen diamond. . . . This inspires me with very low ideas of University training." The remarkable lay sermon which Florizel delivers to the detective

before he throws the Rajah's diamond into the Seine is in point. It has a smack of Horatian commonplaces on wealth expanded, a little of a Scots sermon—and we know that R. L. S. loved ethical speculation, and loved to preach. Yet there is a mocking touch of unreality about it all, and you cannot tell—you suspect the author could not himself tell—whether he was in jest or earnest. To give one last example. In the *Lodging for the Night*, after the murder of the monk, Villon, in whom the event has called forth many and various emotions, is robbed by his companions. Occupied with his own reflections, he does not at the time note the theft. "In many ways an artistic nature unfits a man for practical existence."

Far as he goes in some of those reflections, he does not go too far. He has an exquisite propriety, an instinct of things, a kind of refined common sense, which saves him from opposite dangers. He is pathetic, but always with a certain reserve. He is eloquent, but never merely rhetorical; and his wit and humour never degenerate into a grin. To put it in another way, he has command of his tools and of his material; the subject never quite runs away with him, though it sometimes goes near it, as in *The New Arabian Nights*, and perhaps in *An Old Scots Gardener*. There he begins in a lower and more commonplace way, as if he meant merely to set forth the humours and conceits of a fussy old labourer. But he rises, whether of set purpose or not, into a higher mood, so that the last lines are among the most impressive things even he has ever

written. The contrast with the "haughty Babylonian" is a master touch, for it "prays in aid," a striking passage in Isaiah, scarcely to be matched even in the Old Testament. He is particularly careful of his conclusions. He never leaves jagged or ragged ends; nay, the whole chapter seems to lead up and to be rounded off by the last few words. *Finis coronat opus* is true in a peculiar sense of him. Take the *Inland Voyage*, and glance over the chapters. Note the impressive and graceful way in which each of them concludes. And in *A Lodging for the Night*, the last words that conclude the interview between the Lord of Brisetout and Villon, with the rascal poet's final reflections in the early dawn, rounding off on a low note the tragic horrors of the night, are the very perfection of artistic skill.

R. L. S. has a yet higher literary achievement, and that is his use of Scots, not in verse, where he is more of an imitator, but in some phrases and passages in prose. Here he was using a powerful but a dangerous tool, the most dangerous of all in a hand not perfectly skilled, and one like to cut the hand of the would-be artist. Scots lends itself with fatal facility to rhyme, so that it tends to become slipshod. It is difficult to write with dignity and solemnity. There is nothing more drivelling or contemptible than the great mass of Scots minor poetry. Paisley must stand in letters for the third city of the plain, and there is nothing more hideous or more vulgar than the language that is spoken in the by-ways of Glasgow or in a hundred mining villages. But R. L. S. had learned

his in a better school, "being born *Britannis in montibus*, indeed, but alas! *inerudito saeculo*." He picked up what he knew from old folk in remote glens of the Lammermoors or the Pentlands, yet perhaps the most from written record—Ramsay and Fergusson and Burns, vivified by the simpler talk that he himself had heard. Wherever he got it, he knew how to use it. His archaic terms had height and depth. He attains a gloomy, intense brevity not to be matched out of Tacitus; a biting, sarcastic humour only equalled in Burns, save that Burns had the advantage of the poet and the native as over the prose writer and the one to whom the words could scarcely be the very words of his childhood. Scots is full of graphic phrases, of words expressing love and endearment, of descriptive epithets impossible to translate without lengthy paraphrase. In *Tod Lapraik* and *Thrawn Janet* he is at his very best. He thought so himself, and his estimates of such things were ever just. The Scots reader at any rate will agree with him. But when his characters talk Scots anywhere, you have this remarkable force. Thus of the Merry Men and the doomed ship: "They're yowlin' for thon schooner." And Uncle Gordon in the same tale: "Muckle, gutsy, blawing whales; an' fish—the hale clan o' them—cauld-wamed, blind-ee'd, uncanny ferlies." Or the account of Tod Lapraik: "There he sat, a muckle fat white hash of a man like creish, wi' a kind of a holy smile that gart me scunner." And again of the hunter for solan geese: "They pu'd him up like a deid corp, dadding on the craig."

There is something of the terrible in the picture of Peden the prophet. As for *Thrawn Janet*, it is terrible all through: "The saugh skreighed like folk"—but this last phrase is the climax to the scene, and scarcely bears transplanting. I will only refer without further quotation to the Scots of the Judge, his wife, and of Kirstie in *Weir of Hermiston*. It is the Scots of people of position of an earlier day.

As we know, Stevenson said he got his style from the Covenanting writers. It was a conscious exaggeration, but at least he got there some of his most impressive phrases; and not merely that, but as an artist he assimilated their point of view and could reproduce it clarified and refined, purged of tedious absurdities and irrelevancies. From a sometime neglected garden choked with rank vegetation and wild growth he has plucked his rarest flowers. And not merely he, but others—Sir J. M. Barrie, the late Ian Maclaren, Mr. S. R. Crockett, and so on through the descending ranks of the "kailyard school." The dangers of the language and the thought is shown in countless passages where the writers, to adapt the words of R. L. S. himself, make brutal assaults on your feelings, and wallow naked and not ashamed in pools of drivel. The history of the whole movement or phase is singular. For long years Scots literature seemed altogether on the other side. Sir George Mackenzie was the most elegant of writers for his time. Patrick Walker's *Lives* had seemed to him the mere ravings of a fanatic. And Allan Ramsay and Fergusson and the learned Pitcairne, all Cavaliers, and the whole

school they represent, reserved literary admiration for elegant—which usually meant Latin—prose or Scots or Latin verse; and even yet Mackenzie was a name to conjure with. And then came Scott, in sympathy a Cavalier, and yet with a strange delight in Wodrow and Patrick Walker, and a strange power to picture the folk and the sentiments of the Covenant, so that his own favourites—his Claverhouse, his Rob Roy, his Prince Charlie—seem mere lay figures, sawdust dolls, beside living folk like Jeanie Deans, and Cuddie Headrig, and Bailie Nicol Jarvie. And after him the thing came with a rush. Nobody reads Sir George Mackenzie; probably nobody could if they tried. But the tales of the other side have become more and more popular. They had even surprising success in England and among all the English-speaking peoples. The school, through its excesses, has declined of late years; yet the thing, when well done, never fails to charm. The eternal spirit of romance is as permanent as human nature. The Covenanting lives and incidents were, though the actors did not know it, essentially romantic. Moreover, the touch of the supernatural is not merely an added charm, but a charm which in itself is just as powerful. It is fortunate for the fame of R. L. S. that he worked so admirably well in that medium, for, except in Scott's *Wandering Willie's Tale* in *Redgauntlet*, there is nowhere else anything approaching *Thrawn Janet* in the same class of writing to which those two stories belong. It is one of the causes of the continued popularity of our author, and until

there is a considerable change in a widespread sentiment he would seem secure of his place. You cannot conceive of anyone arising who would do the thing better.

Literary fashions, like other fashions, change. The Covenanting note cannot for ever sound pleasing to a great number of readers. Even as it is, it is only on those who know something of the Covenanting mode of thought that *Thrawn Janet* strikes with its full dire import. The purely English as distinguished from the Scots reader would, no doubt does, prefer *Will o' the Mill* or *A Lodging for the Night* to this record of a lonely northern parish. In considering the future place of R. L. S., you must discount this element, powerfully attractive as it is. It is truly said that the question of his permanent place must be left for time to answer, but a few tentative remarks may be useful, for they will help us to distinguish the essential in his achievement. The croakers who have talked of the inevitable reaction may talk truly, but they are premature. Some thought the reaction would begin with his death; his fame has gone on increasing since. However, some parts of the edifice are only supported by the others. Nothing that he did in collaboration is of the first value, possibly with the exception of his plays or parts of them, when he worked with a man of equal genius. With regard to *The Wrong Box*, *The Wrecker*, and *More New Arabian Nights*, he was encumbered with assistance. No doubt his stepson and his wife were people of ability, but no one ranks

them with him as writers, and here at the best they were a fly on the wheel, more often a serious clog. Again, he was not at his best in a long story. The high level is not sustained throughout. The worker in miniature was overweighted by a big plan. I do not see how anyone can place his longer novels on the same level as his short stories, but these are uniformly of the highest merit. Deserving to rank with them are his essays and sketches, and the two volumes of travel, where all his qualities are at their best—his candour and openness, his wit and pathos, his personality vivid on every page, constituting the most essential element of that singular charm which permeates his work. Here, he is most the artist in words. He maintains the high level throughout; his construction is perfect. It is difficult to conceive a time when those pieces will fail to attract. If some of his merits be local and accidental, others were founded on a profound knowledge of what is of true interest to everyone who possesses the brain to read intelligently, and the taste to appreciate not merely picturesque and romantic adventure, but refined, tender, and generous human sentiment. Surely the mind of man must undergo radical change ere the best of his work be permanently neglected.

INDEX

Academy, Edinburgh, 31, 32, 33, 58
Advocates' Library, 37, 38
Archer, William, 227, 248
Argyll, Archibald Duke of, 127, 128, 132, 149
Arthur's Seat, 44, 45

Balfour, Rev. Dr., 7, 85
Balfours of Pilrig, 7, 56, 154–157, 261, 292
Barbizon, 15, 179–183, 195, 196
Barrie, Sir J. M., Bart., 6, 51, 274, 303
Bass, The, 104, 110–112, 151
Baxter, Charles, 35, 40, 51, 52, 239, 261
Baxter Place, 2, 25
Bournemouth, 21, 174, 176
Braxfield, Lord, 39, 64, 65, 228, 260, 263, 293
Breck, Alan, 58, 106, 110, 115–117, 123, 125, 126, 129–131, 133–135, 142, 145–148, 291
Bridge, The Forth, 104, 106
British Linen Company's Bank, 54, 70
Broughton, 26, 58, 59
Buckstone, The, 78, 100
Burns, Robert, 7, 15, 65, 187, 253, 276, 290, 291, 293, 302

Calton Hill, 33, 38, 39, 44, 56, 76
Canongate, The, 44, 45
Carlyle, Thomas, 15, 232
Church, Established, 9, 70, 276
Church, Free, 9, 70, 276
Club, Savile, The, 15
Cockburn, Lord, 31, 64, 85, 99
Colinton, 7, 10, 78, 85–89
Colvin, Lady, 101, 229, 233, 270, 271
Colvin, Sir Sidney, 19, 20, 51, 94, 96, 158, 226, 228, 239
Constitutional Law, Chair of, 18, 19
Cornhill Magazine, The, 16
Corstorphine and neighbourhood, 73, 74, 80, 87, 106, 107
Covenanters, The, 9, 70, 95, 96, 98, 99, 188, 272–274, 292, 303, 305
Cramond, 107, 108
Crockett, S. R., 51, 102, 303
Cunningham, Alison, 9, 288

Damien, Father, 26, 220–224
Davos Platz, 18, 21
Dickens, Charles, 159, 285, 294

Edinburgh, 6, 7, 10, 12, 14, 18, 20, 25, 27, 29, 32–34, 38, 40–79, 82, 85–87, 89, 92, 97, 100, 103, 106–109, 112, 124, 138, 139, 144 146, 148, 155, 156, 160, 171, 178, 229, 235–238, 248, 256, 259, 260, 288, 291, 292
Edinburgh Castle, 43, 45, 49, 60–62, 72, 80, 139
Edinburgh, New Town of, 27–29, 45, 46
Edinburgh, Old, 46, 50, 53, 55, 57–59, 63–67, 71, 98, 236–238

Edinburgh University, 10, 11, 14, 18, 34–36, 156, 259
Elgin Marbles, 231, 271

Fairmilehead, 87, 99, 100, 292
Fergusson, Robert, 12, 46, 205, 235, 236, 253, 293, 302, 303
Ferrier, James Walter, 35, 39, 226, 231
Firth of Forth, 27, 43, 80, 103, 104
Fontainebleau, 15, 178, 179, 192
Forbes, Duncan, of Culloden, 136, 153, 261, 262
Fraser, Simon, 149, 152–154, 261
Frederick Street, 30

George Square, 65, 66
Glencorse, 78, 79, 81, 89, 94, 95, 100–102
Greyfriars, 38, 292
Grez, 15, 182, 183
Gullane, 109, 110

Hammerton, J. A., 186, 187, 193, 194
Henley, W. E., 10, 15, 26, 39, 158, 162, 169, 177, 196, 197, 222, 232, 236, 239, 240, 244–247, 250, 285, [illegible]
Heriot Row, 8, 27–30, 75, 259
Heriot's Hospital, 27, 31, 32
Highlands, The, 18, 27, 45, 114–122
High School, Edinburgh, 33, 67
High Street, 44, 45, 56, 67, 90, 148
Holyrood, 43, 44, 47, 49, 58, 67
Horace, 207, 252, 276, 300
Howard Place, 6, 8, 26, 27
Hugo, Victor, 16, 177, 274, 275
Hume, David, 39, 90, 156

Inverleith Terrace, 8, 26

Jacobites, The, 45, 59, 67, 82, 118, 123, 137, 142–146, 153, 291, 292, 303, 304
Jenkin, Fleeming, 11, 21, 258
Johnson, Dr. Samuel, 116, 168, 241
Judges, Scots, 64, 66, 127, 128, 261, 262

Knox, John, 95, 292

Lang, Andrew, 20, 135, 137, 143
Leith, 25, 155
Leith Walk, 25, 40, 56
Leith, Water of, 26, 56, 83, 86
Lewis, Bailie, 6
London, 10, 15, 49, 56, 97, 142, 158–167, 176–178
Lothian Road, 40

Mackenzie, Sir George, 37, 198, 303, 304
Masson, Professor, 11, 12
Monterey, 16, 208, 209
Moray House, 48, 54
Murder, The Appin, 116, 117, 123–126, 134, 135, 139, 291

New York, 16, 22, 207, 210, 111
Nor' Loch, 43–45, 53, 62
North Berwick, 10, 110, 112, 113

Osbourne, Lloyd, 176, 305, 306
Otis, Captain, 215, 225, 286

Paris, 15, 49, 74, 148, 161, 175, 177, 179, 184, 195, 196
Parliament House, 37, 64, 67, 151, 260, 261, 263
Peebles, 96, 105
Pentlands, The, 7, 10, 44, 78–102, 292, 302
Picardy Place, 25, 56
Pinero, Sir A. W., 248, 249
Prestongrange, Lord, 149–151, 261, 291
Princes Street, 30, 39, 49, 53, 62, 69, 72

Queensferry, 103–107, 117, 173
Queen Street, 28, 29

Ramsay, Allan, 55, 302, 303
Religion of R. L. S., 272–281
Road, Great North, 92, 109, 168
Rock, Inchcape, 2, 3
Roy, Rob, and his sons, 119, 136–144, 292
Rullion Green, 85, 98, 99, 292

San Francisco, 16, 17, 207–209
Scots Observer, The, 26, 197, 222
Scott, Sir Walter, Bart., 15, 31, 46, 66, 85, 95, 100, 104, 111, 115, 148, 168, 170, 220, 257, 261, 291–294, 304
Shakespeare, 8, 168, 170, 284
Silvermills, 58
Simpson, Sir W. G., Bart., 16, 191–197, 200, 201, 226
Slap, The Cauldstane, 78, 82–84, 92, 97
Smith, Rev. Dr., of Galston, 7
Smith, Thomas, engineer, 2, 25
South Seas, Books on, 216, 219, 224
St. Cuthbert's Church, 39, 57
St. Giles', 37, 55, 72
Stephen, Sir Leslie, 15, 19
Stevenson, Allan, 5, 174
Stevenson, David, 5, 6
Stevenson, Robert, 2–5, 7, 11, 25, 256
Stevenson, R. A. M. ("Bob"), 5, 174, 181, 196, 226, 231
Stevenson, R. L.—
  Advocate, 14, 15, 37, 38
  America, in, 16, 17, 22, 203–214
  As engineer and lawyer, 256–263
  As letter-writer, 226–235
  As playwright, 236–249
  As rhymer, 250–255
  Birth, 6
  Character, 49, 282–290
  Continent, on the, 15, 18, 21, 178–202
  Courtship and marriage, 16, 17, 209
Stevenson, R. L. (*continued*)—
  Death, 23
  Dress, 13, 201, 202, 205
  Early years, 7–10
  Education, 11, 12, 14, 30, 31–34
  England, in, 15, 21, 158–176, 283
  Family, 1, 2
  France, in, 15, 177–196
  Grave and epitaph, his, 23, 24, 225
  Health, 17, 18, 22, 23, 174, 175, 211, 227, 283, 284
  Highlands, in the, 18–20
  Mention, 4, 5, 7, 8, 46, 65, 85–90, 102–104, 108, 112, 113, 115, 121, 140, 143, 149, 151, 152
  Name, 1, 2
  Scots, use of, 234, 253, 301–303
  Speculative Society, 35, 36, 67
  Style, question of, 291–306
  Works—
    Aes Triplex, 276
    Amateur Emigrant, 204–207, 211
    Appeal to the Clergy of the Church of Scotland, 276
    Ballads, 254
    Beau Austin, 174, 240–242, 247, 248, 265
    Black Arrow, The, 169, 170, 232, 265
    Body-Snatcher, The, 18, 68, 69, 169, 264
    Brodie, Deacon, 236–240, 248, 249, 260, 265, 269
    Burns, Robert, Some Aspects of, 293
    Camp, A, 253
    Catriona, 23, 53, 55–59, 109–113, 114, 123, 133, 134, 136, 140, 141, 145–149, 151, 152, 194, 197–199, 233, 261, 269, 291
    Child's Garden of Verses, 21, 250, 251
    Children, The Whole Duty of, 252

Stevenson, R. L. (*continued*)—
Works (*continued*)—
Christmas Sermon, A, 277
Donkey, Travels with a, 16, 184–190, 276, 296, 298
Ebb Tide, The, 173, 176, 219, 220, 264
Engineers, Records of a Family of, 4, 258
Evensong, 255
Falesá, The Beach of, 219
Falling in Love, 270
Fontainebleau, 179
Footnote to History, 219, 293
Foreigner at Home, The, 31
Gardener, An old Scots, 300, 301
Gardener, To a, 252
Gossip on Romance, 105, 173, 174
Guinea, Admiral, 242–244, 247–248, 265
Heathercat, 95, 274
Ille Terrarum, 253, 276
Inland Voyage, An, 16, 184, 191–197, 200, 201, 293, 301
Island Nights' Entertainments, 219
Jenkin, Fleeming, Life of, 21, 258
Kidnapped, 21, 53, 55, 103–107, 114–120, 123, 136, 143, 145, 264, 291
Knox, John, and his Relations to Women, 270, 292
Lantern Bearers, The, 111, 113
Laprain, Tod, 112, 227, 232, 302
Lay Morals, 279
Letters, The, 121, 170, 275, 287
Lighthouses, The, 258
Lodging for the Night, A, 177, 204, 264, 293, 300, 301, 305
Lowden Sabbath Morn, A, 101, 253, 274
Macaire, 244–248
Stevenson, R. L. (*continued*)—
Works (*continued*)—
Markheim, 159, 160, 264, 297
Master of Ballantrae, 22, 52, 204, 210–213, 261, 265, 286
Memories and Portraits, 85, 105
Merry Men, The, 18, 120, 121, 233, 265, 296, 302
New Arabian Nights, 16, 21, 75, 76, 160–163, 213, 214, 266–268, 286, 300, 305
Nicholson, John, Misadventures of, 69–74, 95, 265
Olalla, 21, 199, 200, 267, 297, 298
Old and New Pacific Capitals, 207
Old Mortality, 39, 76, 299
Open Letter, 222–224, 272–274
Otto, Prince, 199, 266, 298, 299
Pavilion on the Links, 16, 266
Pentland Rising, The, 98, 99, 272, 273
Picturesque Notes, 38, 53, 54, 76, 260, 292
Poems, 70
Prayers, 273, 278, 279
Providence and the Guil, 183, 267
Pulvis et Umbra, 276
Raeburn, Notes on Some Portraits by, 64, 260
Rajah's Diamond, The, 161
Silverado Squatters, 52, 209, 210
Sire de Maletroit's Door, 190, 267
Songs of Travel and Other Verses, 254
South Seas, In the, 22–24, 26, 216–225
St. Ives, 59–64, 91–93, 107, 108, 168, 171, 172, 190, 261, 265, 269
Story of a Lie, 172, 204
Story of the Fair Cuban, 214

Stevenson, R. L. (*continued*)—
Works (*continued*)—
Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The, 22, 159, 160, 163, 164, 249, 260, 264, 290, 295
Suicide Club, The, 161, 299
Thrawn Janet, 18, 95, 227, 233, 302–305
Treasure Island, 20, 169, 172, 173, 243, 244, 264
Treasure of Franchard, The, 183
Underwoods, 70, 252, 253
Vagabond, The, 254
Virginibus Puerisque, 270, 276
Walking Tours, 185
Weir of Hermiston, 23, 64, 91, 93–98, 101, 233, 261, 262, 269, 274, 293, 303
Will o' the Mill, 199, 204, 270, 296, 305
Wrecker, The, 76, 172, 176, 177, 219, 261, 305
Wrong Box, The, 164, 165, 176, 261, 265, 286, 305
Young Chevalier, The, 200
Youth and Love, 254
Stevenson, Mrs. R. L., 16, 17, 22, 183, 203, 204, 209, 273, 305, 306
Stevenson, Thomas, 5, 6, 11, 14, 17, 22, 25–27, 33, 39, 74, 174, 210, 235, 244, 256, 257, 259
Stevenson, Mrs. Thomas, 7, 8, 17, 22, 26, 256, 273
Stewart, James, of the Glen, 117, 123, 124, 126, 129–133, 139, 145, 146, 151
Stewart, James, Trial of, 127–135, 139, 140, 148, 149, 153, 154, 198, 261
Supernatural, 48
Swanston, 10, 64, 78, 87, 88, 90, 91, 99, 292
Symonds, J. A., 18

Tantallon, 110, 111.
Tennyson, 231, 250, 289
Tryst, The Fisher's, 78, 89, 102
Tryst, The Hunter's, 78, 88, 89, 99, 100

Virgil, 200, 232, 250, 252

Walker, Patrick, 113, 274, 303, 304
Weir, Major, 48, 56
Wind, The, 29, 46, 49, 230, 251, 297, 298
Women of R. L. S., 264–271

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
General Literature	2
Ancient Cities	13
Antiquary's Books	13
Arden Shakespeare	14
Classics of Art	14
'Complete' Series	15
Connoisseur's Library	15
Handbooks of English Church History	16
Handbooks of Theology	16
'Home Life' Series	16
Illustrated Pocket Library of Plain and Coloured Books	16
Leaders of Religion	17
Library of Devotion	17
Little Books on Art	18
Little Galleries	18
Little Guides	18
Little Library	19
Little Quarto Shakespeare	20
Miniature Library	20
New Library of Medicine	21
New Library of Music	21
Oxford Biographies	21
Four Plays	21
States of Italy	21
Westminster Commentaries	22
'Young' Series	22
Shilling Library	22
Books for Travellers	23
Some Books on Art	23
Some Books on Italy	24
Fiction	25
Books for Boys and Girls	30
Shilling Novels	30
Sevenpenny Novels	31

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